



The Honey Industry and Filtration

November 8, 2011

RESPONSE TO RECENT FOOD SAFETY NEWS ARTICLE WHICH CRITICIZES THE USDA APPROVED STANDARD METHOD OF HONEY FILTRATION

This serves to respond to misleading and false conclusions published in the most recent Food Safety News article written by Andrew Schneider. Unfortunately, Mr. Schneider confuses the long standing USDA approved practice of **Honey Filtration** with the prohibited practice of **Ultra Filtration**. In his article, Mr. Schneider attempts to make the case that honey on the store shelf without pollen cannot be considered pure honey. Link to [Food Safety News article](#).

The custom of filtering raw honey prior to bottling on the part of U.S. honey packers is a USDA approved standard practice. As described in the USDA grade standards for honey: filtered honey is honey of any type defined in the standards that has been filtered to the extent that all or most of the fine particles, pollen grains, air bubbles, or other materials normally found in suspension, have been removed. (52-1393 Styles)

In short, the USDA grade standards consider filtered pure honey to have retained the essential properties that make it pure honey.

Honey packers in North America apply the USDA approved method of filtration as a means to insure a liquid, shelf stable honey that will remain free of crystallization for a reasonable period of time. Failure to remove the fine particulates existing in raw honey (including debris, wax particles, bee parts and pollen) will increase the likelihood for honey to crystallize prematurely which in turn is deemed as unacceptable by U.S. consumers. Indeed, the most commonly reported consumer complaint about honey pertains to premature crystallization of the product before it has been fully consumed.

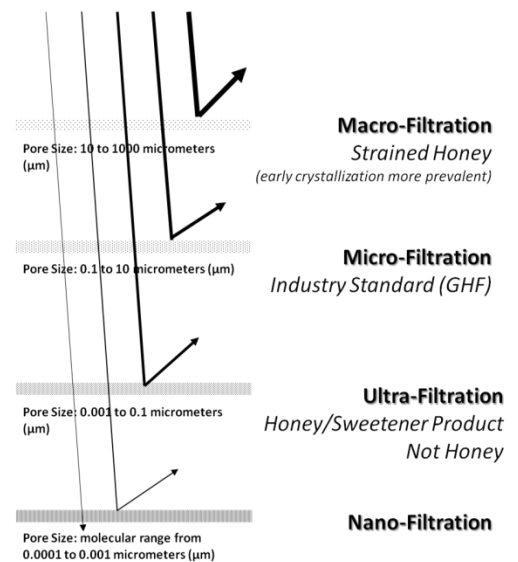
In contrast to proper USDA approved filtration, Ultra Filtration is an illegal means of removing prohibited antibiotics and to conceal the true origin of the honey. This has been but one method on the part of China and others of removing the traceable elements of honey in order to surreptitiously ship it into the U.S. through other countries in order to avoid U.S. anti-dumping duties. Ultra Filtration requires the addition of water prior to filtration and later evaporation to return the honey to its original consistency. This practice is prohibited by the FDA and product treated in this manner is no longer considered honey in the United States.

One final point related to the Ultra Filtration of honey: This process presumably occurs with questionable foreign honey before being sold to commercial honey packers. Golden Heritage Foods and other law abiding honey packers would never receive raw honey that was absent of pollen as well as other particulate matter that indicates its authentic "raw" state. Furthermore, the [True Source Honey Traceability program](#) which is certified by a prominent, global food safety auditor is the ultimate means of assuring the authentic origin of every drop of honey we pack and distribute. Golden Heritage Foods is honored to be the first honey packer in America to have achieved this critical certification.

We greatly value all questions from the food distributors to whom we supply honey as well as those who consume our honey. Please feel free to contact the following individuals at Golden Heritage Foods for further inquiries regarding this or any other question related to honey.

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Source: National Honey Board – Filtration Paper
<http://www.honey.com/images/downloads/filtration.pdf>