

Sweet deception: New test distinguishes impure honey from the real thing

May 7 2009



Scientists have developed a test to identify adulterated or impure honey. Credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Here's some sweet news for honey lovers: Researchers in France are reporting development of a simple test for distinguishing 100 percent natural honeys from adulterated or impure versions that they say are increasingly being foisted off on consumers. Their study appears in *ACS' Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.

Bernard Herbreteau and colleagues point out that the high price of [honey](#)

and its limited supply has led some beekeepers and food processors to fraudulently make and sell impure honey doped with inexpensive sweeteners, such as corn syrup. These knock-offs are almost physically and chemically indistinguishable from the real thing. Scientists need a better way to identify adulterated honey, the researchers say.

Herbreteau and colleagues describe a new, highly sensitive test that uses a special type of chromatography to separate and identify complex sugars (polysaccharides) on their characteristic chemical fingerprints. To test their method, the scientists obtained three different varieties of pure honey from a single beekeeper and then prepared adulterated samples of the honeys by adding 1 percent corn syrup. They showed that the new technique accurately distinguished the impure honeys from the pure versions based on differences in their sugar content.

More information: “Polysaccharides as a Marker for Detection of Corn Sugar Syrup Addition in Honey”, [Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry](#)

Provided by American Chemical Society ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Sweet deception: New test distinguishes impure honey from the real thing (2009, May 7) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-05-sweet-deception-distinguishes-impure-honey.html>

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