

# Cumbria Bee Times

New Issue 5

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(Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the Editor and do not necessarily represent those of the CBKA)

## Happy New Year to all Readers

At the moment it is -5C outside and I haven't seen a sign of life around my hives for 3 weeks. I am just hoping that the hives are protected enough against the biting cold. I used old carpet squares over the crown boards this year as insulation but I regret that I have not got all the colonies in WBCs. In this sort of winter there is a good argument for double walled hives despite the extra work during the rest of the year!

Val S.

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## Branches and Secretaries

The Cumbria Beekeepers Association currently has five branches, whose contact details are:

### Carlisle

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## A Guide to Retailing

These notes are taken from a lecture given by Eamonn Quinn, Cumbria Trading Standards, at the Cumbria Honey Show on 14 November 2009.

If you want to describe your honey as being a specific type, rather than simply 'honey' then you can use one of a range of 'reserved descriptions'. But be aware that these have defined meanings in law, so you must be sure your honey meets the given description.

### Reserved Descriptions:

- **Blossom or Nectar Honey**  
honey obtained from the nectar of plants
- **Honeydew Honey**  
honey obtained from the secretion of plant-sucking insects
- **Comb Honey**  
honey stored in freshly-built broodless combs and sold in combs
- **Chunk Honey**  
honey containing a piece or pieces of comb honey
- **Drained Honey**  
honey obtained by draining de-capped broodless combs
- **Extracted Honey**  
honey obtained by centrifuge
- **Pressed Honey**  
honey obtained by pressing, with or without warming (not to exceed 45°C)
- **Filtered Honey**  
honey filtered in such a way as to result in the significant removal of pollen. Usually obtained by pressing warmed honey through extra-fine filters. (Note that pollen grains are extremely small – most are less than 200 microns – so normal straining, even through very fine cloths, will not produce 'filtered honey')
- **Baker's Honey**  
honey suitable for industrial uses or as an ingredient in a processed food product. E.G. foreign taste or odour, fermenting, overheated. Baker's honey sold in its own right as a food must be accompanied by the words 'intended for cooking only'

To avoid the pitfalls of mis-describing your honey you can use the generic term 'honey'. Honey cannot have any added ingredients.

Monofloral honeys were not mentioned, nor can I find any reference to them on the Trading Standards website, though I am certain that honeys so described must contain a minimum percentage of honey from the named flower, which can be determined by pollen analysis (or melissopalynology). So if you sell yours as, say 'clover honey' or 'heather honey' you might be advised to satisfy yourself that the product meets the required standard.

### Labelling

Honey sold through commercial retailers must have a label bearing the following information:

#### Mandatory

- Reserved description or 'honey'
- Country of origin (There was some discussion as to whether Scotland is a country for the purpose of this definition. Eamonn Quinn did not know. Opinion was that it is not, but that it is a 'region' of the United Kingdom. The same applies to Wales and Northern Ireland, but no mention of England. The words 'produce of UK' will always meet the standard, but 'England' or 'Scotland' would almost certainly not be a problem. The test is whether the description is intended, or likely, to mislead, (which in this case it would not be.) Special provision exists for blends from more than one country.
- Weight (metric). You can show the weight in lb and oz as well as, not instead of, the metric weight, but it must not be printed larger than, or otherwise be more prominent than, the metric weight.
- Use-by or best-before date. (No guidance was offered on this. Eamonn said that, as honey is a preservative, he would be happy if you put 2050! But it has to be there.)  
Name and address of 'manufacturer, packer, or supplier' Traceability code, such as a batch number

#### Optional

- Floral or plant origin
- Regional, territorial or topographical origin
- Indication of quality, e.g. pure, fresh

Any such descriptions must be accurate and not intended to mislead.

If you sell your honey at the door, farm gate, or through a farmers' market then you only need 'Honey', country of origin and metric weight, and you must have traceability. But if you only extract once a year, then the year would suffice. Prescribed quantities no longer apply, so you can sell honey in any weights you like as long as the weight of honey is not less than that stated on the label. The British Importers and Packers Association adhere to a voluntary labelling code whereby all honey on retail sale includes a warning statement that "honey should not be given to infants under 12 months of age." This is a precautionary measure against possible infant botulism which could potentially arise from the presence of Clostridium Botulinum spores in honey. This is not a statutory requirement.

Thanks to Ray Knowles for providing this useful synopsis