

LET'S TALK ABOUT ... true source certified honey

LET'S TALK TO GORDON MARKS ABOUT ... true source certified honey

Why does honey need to be certified?

A few years ago, honey was involved in one of the largest food fraud cases in the U.S. Despite federal crackdowns, millions of pounds of illegally sourced honey (and honey of questionable quality) may still be entering the country. Most suppliers are honest, but some honey enters the U.S. in circumvention of trade laws, avoiding quality and safety assurances, as well.

Is certified honey better? Safer?

When you don't know the origin of the honey, it's difficult to be assured of its quality. For example, an antibiotic that has been banned in the U.S. has sometimes been found in honey originating in China. Other honey has been found to contain added syrups or sweetener extenders. If the origin of "honey" is misrepresented as it enters the country, the necessary quality and purity tests may not be conducted. The True Source program includes audits by NSF, an internationally recognized third-party firm that certifies the source of honey.

Tell us about True Source Certified Honey.

The True Source Certified Honey program provides traceability from the hive to the table, and confirms that packers and exporters maintain a system to analyze honey purity. Quite simply, it's designed to promote 100% pure, traceable honey in the marketplace.

Who takes part in the program?

The True Source Honey initiative is a nonprofit organization currently representing more than 30% of the honey

sold in North America. The program is open to all honey packers, importers, exporters and beekeepers who want to take the necessary steps to ensure ethical sourcing and honey quality.

How much honey is produced in the U.S.? How much is imported?

The U.S. uses about 530 million pounds of honey each year. About 30% is produced domestically and the remaining amount has to be imported.

How do companies that don't obey U.S. trade laws impact us?

It's estimated that the U.S. loses millions of dollars each year in uncollected duties because of illegal honey imports. Furthermore, this threatens the nation's beekeepers—who are already facing challenges with declining bee populations—as well as the entire U.S. honey industry by undercutting fair market prices and damaging honey's reputation for quality and safety. Consumers, chefs and food manufacturers who count on honey are not always getting the quality natural product they think they are buying and that they deserve.

How can chefs make sure the honey they receive is properly sourced?

Look for the True Source Honey Certified mark to make sure you are receiving ethically and transparently sourced honey. If you don't see the logo, check www.TrueSourceHoney.com to see if the company packing your honey participates in the True Source Certified program. If not, contact the company or the distributor to tell them you're concerned.



Tell us what you love about honey.

Honey is a pure and natural product. It's made in one of the world's most amazing factories—the beehive. Honeybees do so much more for our environment. While gathering nectar to make honey, the bees also pollinate many fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts, as well as benefit home gardens and wildlife habitats. 🍯

GORDON MARKS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRUE SOURCE HONEY, WASHINGTON, D.C.