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True Source Honey Will Launch Certification Program To Help Stem the Tide of Illegal Honey

November 12, 2010 – True Source Honey, LLC is pleased to announce that it is launching a Certified True Source Honey® Traceability Program starting in 2011. The program, which will be formally launched at the 2011 North American Beekeeping Conference in January, is designed to certify the origin, food safety and purity of the honey being distributed and consumed within North America.

The new voluntary standard is open to interested honey companies (packers, producers, importers and exporters) under the True Source Honey program. It was developed by a multi-disciplined group of industry participants, including honey companies (packers, producers, importers and exporters), that want to ramp up industry participation in solving the problem of illegally sourced honey. An internationally recognized third party audit firm will begin conducting audits for honey companies, producers, exporters and importers starting in 2011. For those applying for certification, the firm will conduct unannounced inspections, review documents and collect samples for country of origin verification.

Every honey company is invited to become a member of the True Source Honey program. This will help create transparency within the industry and go beyond the current expectations of certifications and federal regulations with an additional layer of traceability that starts at the hive. Those who want to help eliminate illegally sourced honey and maintain honey's natural reputation of quality and safety are encouraged to participate.

Most imported and domestic honey is from high-quality, legal sources. However, some importers, brokers and honey companies are illegally circumventing tariffs and quality controls, selling honey to companies and consumers that is of questionable origin. In addition to creating food safety issues for consumers, this threatens the honey industry by undercutting fair market prices and damaging honey's reputation for quality and safety.

For example, in September of this year, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Justice indicted 11 German and Chinese individuals and six corporations for allegedly participating in an international conspiracy to illegally import Chinese honey. Federal officials said the defendants allegedly imported more than \$40 million of Chinese honey, including honey that was adulterated with unapproved antibiotics. This indictment is the largest in a string of federal actions in the past two years directed at stopping illegal honey trade.

While these federal actions are critical, further action is needed by the industry itself. The Certified True Source Honey Traceability Program will allow all interested parties along the honey chain to join together in stopping these illegal practices. Additional details of this exciting new program will be announced at the 2011 North American Beekeeping Conference, a joint convention of the American Honey Producers Association, the American Beekeeping Federation and the Canadian Honey Council in Galveston, Texas, at the San Luis Resort, January 3-9, 2011.

Watch for further information at <http://www.TrueSourceHoney.com>.

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True Source Honey, LLC is an effort by a number of honey companies and importers to call attention to the problem of illegally sourced honey; to encourage action to protect consumers and customers from these practices; and to highlight and support legal, transparent and ethical sourcing. True Source Honey, LLC seeks to help maintain the reputation of honey as a high-quality, highly valued food and further sustain the U.S. honey sector. Learn more at www.TrueSourceHoney.com.