Effective action on honey adulteration

GHIC statement | 7 October 2026

The Global Honey Integrity Council (GHIC) calls for timely investigation of credible evidence of honey adulteration and effective action to end established non-compliance. Protecting authentic honey requires suitable analysis, traceable supply chains and decisions whose practical effects can be verified.

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 already requires competent authorities to conduct risk-based controls, including controls addressing fraudulent and deceptive practices. Suspected non-compliance calls for investigation. Where non-compliance is established, appropriate measures are required to determine its origin and extent, remedy the infringement and prevent its recurrence. [1]

Further development of harmonised methods is necessary. It does not replace existing control duties or the technical assessment of an individual case. The lawful routes for engaging suitable official laboratories, including private and cross-border laboratories where the applicable conditions are met, should be used in practice. [1, 2]

Findings must support the conclusion being claimed

GHIC supports the use of suitable analytical methods alongside scrutiny of operators' own controls, origin records, batch relationships and goods movements. A negative result must be interpreted within the method's validated scope and does not establish authenticity beyond that scope. An adverse finding must be assessed for sample identity, validation, matrix suitability and interpretative limits. The authority determines the legal conclusion from the reliable evidence as a whole.

Established product non-compliance and proof of intentional criminal fraud are distinct questions. Action against unlawful marketing should not be postponed as a general rule until every criminal investigation has ended. Equally, a screening signal does not by itself establish a final infringement. [1]

Make corrective action verifiable

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Existing controls must deliver verifiable results

Published control figures must identify the market segments and adulteration types actually examined. Without that context, low detection rates do not establish low adulteration in retail honey. The Malmö decisions and reports from the FDA and CFIA provide concrete examples of case-specific action. Their respective scope must be respected. [3-6]

GHIC calls for a transparent account: which goods were affected, which measures were taken, how they were implemented and how recurrence is being prevented. Results from different sampling programmes must not be presented as directly comparable market prevalence rates.

What GHIC expects from authorities and operators

- Assess specific evidence and identify the responsible authority and a clear next step.
- Evaluate methods against their demonstrated scope and explain the requirements for suitable laboratory evidence.
- Take appropriate, proportionate corrective action when non-compliance is established and verify implementation.
- Investigate cross-border goods movements and involve the relevant authorities.

GHIC welcomes the contribution of the Imkerverband Rheinland-Pfalz to the debate on effective enforcement. Our standard is reliable evidence, precise application of the law and demonstrable protection for consumers, honest beekeepers and responsible market operators.

Goods marketed as honey must meet the applicable requirements. Reliable evidence must lead to a reasoned decision. Where non-compliance is established, that decision must lead to effective corrective action.

[1] OCR 2017/625 · [2] C/2024/6481 · [3] LAVES · [4a] Malmö MN-2026-4090 · [4b] Malmö MN-2026-1882 · [5a] FDA FY25 · [5b] FDA Import Alert 99-47 · [6] CFIA 2024/25
Sources checked 7 October 2026. Links open the cited sources.

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