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Quality Aspects of Honey Locally Processed and Marketed in Uganda — Implications for International Markets

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Abstract

Honey is of growing economic importance worldwide. Maintenance of natural honey quality developing countries is essential for premium price markets and in protecting consumers from potential health hazards. This study assessed the quality of locally processed and marketed honey (branded and unbranded) across major retail groups (supermarkets, hawkers and stall markets) in Uganda. The honey moisture content (MC), free acidity (FA), diastase number (DN), hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF), water insoluble solids (WIS) and total acidity (TA) were analysed.

Significant ($p < 0.05$) differences in HMF concentrations and DN among branded honey types were observed. However, there were no differences ($p > 0.05$) in MC, FA, TA and WIS values of all brands studied. While 80% of the brands had MC and HMF values meeting the Uganda and Codex Alimentarius quality standards, only 60% had the required DN qualities. With regard to the European market standard, only 40 and 20% of brands would qualify in terms of HMF and DN restrictions, respectively.

With respect to Uganda's and international standards, retailed honey qualified only in MC and HMF. Free acidity, DN, and WIS were the main bottlenecks to honey quality in Kampala's retail groups. For the European market, honey from Kampala's retail groups only qualified in moisture content. From the international (Codex Alimentarius and EU) standards standpoint, the brands only qualified in MC, HMF, DN and WIS. It was concluded that supermarket honey is superior to Stall- and Hawker-marketed honey. For Uganda's honey to make it to the international markets, it is recommended to enforce quality standards at all levels of honey production, processing and marketing.

Keywords: Honey processing, honey quality, Uganda market