

Marketing of Honey

The local market for honey is significant and demand in urban areas outstrips supply. Trade opportunities for other bee products are also growing. However, inefficiencies in the supply chain and the low capacity of producers to negotiate markets, limits capacity to exploit the country's full potential.

Cooperatives, individuals and self helps groups are involved in marketing of the honey

Honey is sold both locally and internationally. Locally, it's sold in the supermarkets and shops. It is also hawked along the main roadsides (in the areas where it is produced), in towns and villages. Export markets include US, Japan, and European Union.

Honey is also traded within the EAC and COMESA trading blocks and to be able to penetrate the market traders have to adhere to EAC sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, and export and import guidelines

Honey marketing in Kenya

Honey is a natural sweetener and its naturalness is its main selling point. Therefore every effort must be made to maintain the delicate flavour and aroma found in newly extracted honey.

Majority of small scale beekeepers usually consider honey as a product for home consumption instead of a cash crop, thus missing out on the income benefits. Honey has a high cash value relative to its weight and bulk. Properly stored, it is essentially a non-perishable product. These characteristics make honey an attractive crop suitable for small scale producers.

There are various factors that affect honey marketing;

1) Quality:

Quality of honey is a key factor in ensuring a niche in the market. Various factors identified as key determinants in honey quality are harvesting methods, processing procedures and storage.

2) Blending Of Honey:

Most traders practise honey blending. This is either to provide uniformity of the product or to meet certain trade requirements.

3) Packaging:

It is important to observe proper packaging hygiene practises to avoid post contamination.

Liquid honey must portray a clean attractive appearance and remain free from crystallisation for a market period of at least 6-9 months. Honey packaging should be done in airtight containers. Ensure uniformity in packaging in terms of, weight, volume, package size and shape.

Packing containers used include:

- Glass containers
- Plastic containers
- Stainless steel containers

The size will depend on the demand they can be 250gm, 500gm, 750gm, 1 kg. 300kg, 500kg depending on market segments. The containers should also be:

- Attractive
- Appropriate (convenient) shape
- Affordable.
- Easy to transport.
- Clear so as to show the colour of honey for retail market.

4. Labelling:

The label should be attractive and descriptive of the product; it should include expiry date, address, weight, nutritive value and any other relevant information.

- The size of the label should be proportional to the bottle/jar or any package.
- Cost of label should be reasonable to ensure the price of the product is competitive.

5. Pricing:

The price of honey is determined by analysing the following.

- Cost of production, processing, packaging, transportation, labour and miscellaneous.
- The price should be competitive and the profit margins reasonable.

6. Promotion:

This involves creating awareness and interest in a product. The following are different ways of promoting honey in the market.

- Labelling
- Attractive Packaging
- Free samples
- Advertising through:

- ✓ Electronic and print media
- ✓ International and National publications
- ✓ Sign boards, roadside adverts
- ✓ Promotional leaflets/brochures
- ✓ Introduction letters
- ✓ Word of mouth
- Marketing representatives

Promotional corners outside food stores, supermarkets, shopping malls

Honey in the market is presented in several forms:

1. Unprocessed Honey

This is honey in its raw form, with combs that have been broken to release the honey from the cells. Demand for this honey is high. The main market outlet is traditional brewers and herbalist. Price depends on supply and demand. Currently farm gate prices range from Ksh70-150 per kg.

2. Semi-Refined Honey

This is mainly honey where most of the combs have been manually removed leaving the liquid honey with few impurities. Demand is very high mainly from processors and packers. Price ranges from Ksh80-170 per kg depending on the season.

3. Refined/Liquid Honey

This is honey that has been strained to remove all the foreign particles. It is normally packed in plastic or glass jars of 350gm, 500gm or in any other convenient pack. Retail price range between Ksh150-300 for the 500gm jar.

4. Chunk Honey

This is honey that has a piece of comb honey immersed in refined liquid honey. Packages used are normally glass jars. This form of honey is not very common in the market however; consumers who like both comb and refined honey will usually pay a higher price for this special chunk honey pack.

Creamed Honey

This is honey that has been made to solidify under specific conditions. The crystals are very fine and not visible, therefore can be spread easily like butter. The marketability has not been fully exploited due to inadequate skills for its preparation and low consumer awareness.

5. Comb Honey

This is honey contained in the cells of the comb in which it is produced. Good comb honey is to the beekeeper and consumer a product of beauty. The comb honey should be kept intact until it is ready for market. Preparation for market involves cutting sections of the comb into various shapes and sizes depending on the package.



Comb honey