

HONEY SALES IN MONTANA — Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do I need to do to sell honey in Montana?

A: The answer will depend on:

- **what type** of honey you plan to sell,
- **to whom** you plan to sell the honey, and
- **where or how** it is sold.

Q: What are the types of honey?

A: There is RAW (unprocessed) honey and PROCESSED honey.

Q: What is RAW (unprocessed) honey?

A: RAW (unprocessed) honey is honey that *has not* been:

- heat treated;
- filtered;
- had flavor or ingredients added (i.e. syrups, sweeteners, colorings);
- treated with any other value-added method (i.e. creamed or whipped).

Q: What is PROCESSED honey?

A: PROCESSED honey is honey that is no longer in its raw state—it is honey to which you have added something or changed the characteristics of the raw honey in some way. This can include added ingredients such as flavorings, herbs or spices, or processes such as pasteurization or creaming.

Q: Do I need a license to sell only RAW honey directly to the consumer?

A: No, you may sell RAW honey directly to the end consumer without a license if the transaction is an in-person, face-to-face interaction. This includes at your home, farmers' markets, or craft fairs. You may also sell RAW honey at your own store without a license if it is the only food product you sell, or you only sell exempt foods that do not require a license, such as commercially prepackaged foods that are not potentially hazardous.

Q: What if I want to sell my honey (RAW or PROCESSED) to other businesses such as a grocery store or gift shop?

A: You will need a wholesale food license if the product is sold to another business that then sells it to the consumer. A wholesale food license is obtained by completing a wholesale food review form and license application with your local sanitarian. This form is available online at www.fcss.mt.gov under the link “wholesale food establishments”.

Q: Do I need a license to sell PROCESSED honey directly to the consumer?

A: Yes. The type of license will depend on the venues at which you wish to sell the PROCESSED honey directly to the consumer.

Q: Do I need a license to sell PROCESSED honey that I make at home and take to the farmers market?

A: If you process honey at home, you may sell the PROCESSED honey at your home, farmers markets, or other venues such as craft fairs by completing a cottage food registration with your local sanitarian. This is available at www.fcss.mt.gov.

Q: I have a wholesale food license for PROCESSED honey. I want to sell my honey at the local farmers market. Do I need an additional license?

A: No, you may sell your PROCESSED honey at the farmers market with your wholesale food license. It would qualify as a commercial prepackaged food that is not potentially hazardous.

Q: I want to sell PROCESSED honey at my store. What type of license do I need?

A: For PROCESSED honey, you will need a license for a retail food establishment. The application is available from your local sanitarian. The contact information for your sanitarian is available online at www.fcss.mt.gov.

Q: How should I label my honey?

A: All honey sold in containers must be labeled with the product's identity, contact information and net weight. For example, your honey can be labeled using the format below.

HONEY
Name of producer Address (Physical Address—not PO Box) City, State, Zip code
Net wt.: __ oz. (___g)

You may call your product “honey” if there are no added ingredients or flavor. If flavor is added, it must be indicated in the name of the product. If sugar or other sweetener is added, then the name must indicate that the product is a blend of honey and that sweetener. If anything is added to the honey, you must have an ingredient list listing the items from greatest to least.

If any ingredients are added to the honey, there are additional labeling requirements. Additional information on labels is available online at www.fcss.mt.gov under wholesale foods. Additional information may also be found on the Honey Board website at www.honey.com.

Q: Can I make health or nutrient claims on my honey label? Is a nutrition label necessary?

A: The FDA has very strict rules about health and nutrient claims on labels. Health claims are not allowed unless there is scientific proof. Nutrition labeling is only required under certain circumstances. Please consult www.fcss.gov under wholesale foods for more information on labeling. Additional information may also be found on the Honey Board website at www.honey.com.

Q: Do I need to put a warning on my label for infants?

A: Although it is not required, honey producers often include a statement like the following: “Warning: Honey should not be fed to infants under one year of age.” This is due to the risk of infant botulism.

Q: What do I need to do to sell honey over the internet?

A: Contact your local sanitarian to determine if licensing is applicable.