



# Canada's Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

## Canada's Honey Industry

Canadian honey is recognized around the world to be of the highest quality. Vast expanses of canola, clover and alfalfa provide foraging for bees, which produce a mild, white honey prized for its taste. The traditionally sunny and long summers of the Canadian prairies provide honeybees with access to bountiful flowering crops. The result: the average honey yield in Canada is twice the world's average. Canada is the world's sixth largest producer of honey.

Canadian honey is enjoyed in more than 25 countries. In 2002, 8,884 beekeepers in all 10 provinces and the territories maintained 585,683 beehives that produced 33,297 tonnes of honey valued at approximately \$90 million in farm-gate receipts. On average, Canada exports one third to one half of this honey each year. In 2002, Canada exported 21,914 tonnes of honey valued at \$87.9 million. The US remained by far the primary direction in 2002, absorbing 90 percent of total exports followed by Germany with 4 percent.

Antibiotics found in Chinese honey in early 2002 has caused a world shortage of honey in export markets with the resultant price rise. This situation favored Canada's honey industry.

The Canadian honey industry offers much more than just honey. Other honey by-products include:

- beeswax for candles and household products such as polishes;
- protein-rich pollen, which is used as a diet supplement;
- propolis, which is becoming widely known and accepted as an ingredient in cosmetics and lip balms, as well as a tonic; and
- royal jelly, a special feed produced by worker bees for the queen bee, which is used in skin creams and lotions.



The number of honeybee colonies/hives continues to rise, reflecting bee health and the demand for high-quality Canadian honey. Canada closed its border to honeybee imports from the continental United States in 1987, when the varroa parasitic mite was first detected.

The safety and quality of Canadian honey is second to none. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, through the Honey Regulations of the Canada Agricultural Products Act, ensures that producers and importers meet strict federal standards.

In most provinces, the beekeeping industry is served by provincial apiculturists who are responsible for the registration of beekeepers, bee health, management practices and other issues affecting beekeepers.





## Additional information

The Canadian honeybee industry is almost totally self-sufficient; it does, however, import, under permit, about 100,000 to 150,000 queen bees each year from Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia.

Bees play a vital role in the pollination of many crops. Fruit and vegetable producers rent beehives from beekeepers in the spring to make sure that pollination takes place. It has been estimated that honeybee pollination contributes up to \$1 billion annually in terms of increased agricultural production.

Packaged honey, which is filtered and can be pasteurised, doesn't need any preservatives and has a shelf life of up to two years.

## For more detailed information

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**Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service Web site at:** <http://ats.agr.ca>.

## Other links:

Statistics Canada free publication on honey  
Situation and Trends  
[http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/hort/trends\\_e.html](http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/hort/trends_e.html)

Canadian Honey Council  
<http://www.honeycouncil.ca/indexe.html>

Canada's food and beverage industry is recognized internationally as being among the best in the world, both in terms of ensuring food safety and quality, and in providing a trade friendly environment. Consumers are more aware of food security, safety and quality, and are demanding more information about how their food is produced. More than ever, consumers want to know that their food is safe and that it has been produced in an environmentally responsible manner.

Canada's objective is to be the world leader in food safety, innovation, and environmentally responsible production and to be the best at meeting the needs of consumers at home and abroad.