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NATIONAL
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THE SWEET TRUTH BEHIND HONEY

The National Honey Board Clarifies Confusion Over Pollen and Ultrafiltration

Firestone, Colo. – August 7, 2012 – [Honey](#) has been in the news recently, covering topics from its source to its authenticity. The National Honey Board (NHB), a federal research and promotion board with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversight, wants to clarify any misconceptions. The NHB utilized industry, culinary and educational resources to produce “The Story of Honey,” which captures the many positives of honey, from being a vital component of a healthy ecosystem to whole body benefits, while shining light on how honey is harvested, from honey bee to table.



“Lately, there has been some confusion about honey and honey filtration,” said Bruce Boynton, CEO of the National Honey Board. “The term “ultrafiltration” has been misused in association with traditional filtration methods commonly used by many U.S. honey packers, leading some consumers to believe that any honey without pollen is not real honey.” “The truth is that honey is made by honey bees from the nectar of flowers and plants, not [pollen](#). ”

This is one of several myths that need clarification, according to the NHB. Harvesting honey is an ancient artisanal craft that is both an art and science. The honey bees gather nectar from flowering plants while beekeepers collect honey from the beehives. The journey from harvesting to distributing honey is multifaceted.

“The bees simply collect nectar, add a few enzymes and store it in the honeycomb. But all of the color, the flavor, the aroma, the antioxidants, whatever constituents are in the honey comes from the particular flower from which the nectar was collected,” said 40-year veteran beekeeper [Gene Brandi](#).

There are more than 300 varieties of honey, ranging greatly in flavor and appearance. After the honey is removed from the beehive and extracted by a beekeeper, it is shipped off to a honey packer, who warms the honey and removes any foreign material or residue from the beehive, often including whatever pollens may have been introduced during the extraction process.

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"The [filtration](#) process that we use is a tried and true method that's been used in the industry for more than 50 years," said [Jill Clark](#), Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Dutch Gold Honey, a 66-year-old family owned and operated business based in Lancaster, Pa. "We warm the honey so it flows smoothly through our filters. Our filter press looks like a large accordion with many paper filters along the way. Honey goes through the paper filters, and this removes the foreign material or the pollen and any residue from the beehive, so that by the time it's through the filter papers, the honey is clear and ready for bottling."

Honey is a natural product that contains just one ingredient: honey. The benefits of honey make it easily accessible for consumers to use in their daily lives. Honey is a whole food that has naturally occurring nutrients. Honey has other uses outside of the culinary realm. As a carbohydrate, honey is a natural energy booster. With humectant properties, honey draws and retains moisture to nourish the body. It is also recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization as a natural cough suppressant in children after the age of one.¹



[Dr. Ian Paul](#) was the lead researcher of a study funded by the National Honey Board to prove honey is an effective natural cough suppressant. "I was looking to find an alternative that would be just as good as the over-the-counter dextromethorphan. I was surprised when we looked at the study results that the honey did the best in the comparison of the honey, the dextromethorphan and no treatment. So I was really happy to be able to provide an alternative for my patients and children around the country," said Dr. Ian Paul of Hershey, Pa. To learn more about the study, [click here](#)

To view the Story of Honey, [click here](#)

[The National Honey Board](#) conducts research, advertising and promotion programs to help maintain and expand markets for honey and honey producers. These programs are funded by an assessment of one cent per pound on domestic and imported honey.

1. Department of Child and Adolescent Health. Cough and Cold Remedies for the Treatment of Acute Respiratory Infections in Young Children. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2001.

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