



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Honey (England) Regulations 2015

Post Implementation Review

May 2021



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| <p>Title: Post Implementation Review on The Honey (England) Regulations 2015</p> <p>PIR No: DEFRA PIR 2021 – 2015 No.1348</p> <p>Original IA/RPC No: n.a.</p> <p>Lead department or agency: Defra</p> <p>Other departments or agencies:</p> <p>n.a.</p> <p>Contact for enquiries:</p> <p>FoodCStandards@defra.gov.uk</p> | Post Implementation Review |
| | Date: 20/05/2021 |
| | Type of regulation: Transposed/England Only |
| | Type of review: Statutory |
| | Date measure came into force: |
| | 24/06/2015 |
| | Recommendation: Keep |
| RPC Opinion: n.a. | |

1. What were the policy objectives of the measure? (Maximum 5 lines)

- (a) To consolidate the Honey Regulations into one set of rules: The Honey Regulations 2003 (HR2003) implemented EC directive 2001/ 110/ EC laying down compositional and specific labelling rules for honey. As part of the Government's Red Tape Challenge Exercise (RTC) at the time covering the Hospitality Sector, it was agreed that the two existing honey regulations should be consolidated into this SI 2015.
- (b) and to provide for a change in reference from EC to EU in relation to the labelling of blended honey. EC Directive requires the country of origin of the honey to be declared but it recognises this may be difficult for honey blends. Hence it allows blended honey to use three alternative descriptors, either a blend of EC honeys, blend on non EC honeys or a blend of EC and non EC honeys whichever is appropriate. These Regulations amended the reference to EU rather than EC as required under the Lisbon Treaty

2. What evidence has informed the PIR? (Maximum 5 lines)

This review was primarily focussed on whether the definition of honey as a reserved description, the description of different types of honey and the listing of its minimum compositional standards were still required to protect consumers.

Defra also conducted an informal targeted stakeholder survey to understand any unintended business impacts of the regulations and determine whether the meat industry still felt they were necessary. The results were not published.

In sum, the overall comments reflect the following text

“Given the complex nature of honey, the numerous floral sources available, the different environments and origins where it is produced, methods of production etc. there will always be debate as to how to define honey and a number of areas may remain unresolved. The Regulation in our opinion sets a sound base in terms of consumer and industry protection and should remain as is.”

3. To what extent have the policy objectives been achieved? (Maximum 5 lines)

The policy objectives have been fully realised.

New regulations were put in place to continue the provisions in HR2003 and move to an enforcement approach using Improvement Notices.

Businesses have been able to comply and enforcement has been in line with expectations. The stakeholder’s survey reflected some areas of improvement in terms of enforcement, but they were related to very narrow fields depending on the viewpoint of the type of association responding. Those can be dealt with within the life of the regulations when engaging further with those stakeholders.

Trading Standards Officers and other representatives of enforcement agencies have emphasised that Improvement Notices are useful enforcement tools and that overall compliance has been good.

The definition of honey as a reserved description, the description of different types of honey and the listing of its minimum compositional standards have remained in place and maintained a level playing field for industry and consumers continue to be protected against other products that do not comply with expected standards.

Overall, the objectives remain appropriate.

The regulations are still required to

- a) ensure that products complying with the definition of *honey* within the Regulations are marketed as honey in England.
- b) ensure that all types of *honey* are defined and only product attaining to those definition are labelled as such; and

- c) ensure that honey meets the minimum compositional standards established in the regulations derived from the EU Honey Directive and the Codex Standard in relation to honey CODEX STAN 12-1981.

There is no equivalent means of ensuring these reserved descriptions are protected.

These regulations will be amended in early 2021 to modify, once again, the manner in which the origin of blended honeys are expressed in the label, moving from *either a blend of EU honeys, blend on non EU honeys or a blend of EU and non EU honeys* to *a blend of honeys from more than one country*, to reflect the fact that the UK has left the EU.

Sign-off for Post Implementation Review: Chief economist/Head of Analysis and Minister

I have read the PIR and I am satisfied that it represents a fair and proportionate assessment of the impact of the measure.

Signed: Maria Prokopiou, Economic Adviser
Lord Benyon, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Date: 15/07/2021

Further information sheet

Please provide additional evidence in subsequent sheets, as required.

4. What were the original assumptions? (Maximum 5 lines)

It was assumed there are no costs related to this change in relation to the 2003 regulations.

The evidence on cost related impacts have been based on the responses of 2 large stakeholders which may not be reflective of the general views of smaller stakeholders. The marginal costs of amending labels may be higher for smaller producers of packaged honey

5. Were there any unintended consequences? (Maximum 5 lines)

These regulations were made 1 year before the EU referendum. Further changes to these Regulations were needed to reflect the fact that the UK has left the EU.

Looking at the trade data for honey, imports and exports, including sales through retail establishments, have increased steadily since the implementation of the regulation in 2015. So, unintended consequences, if any, have been on the positive side.

6. Has the evidence identified any opportunities for reducing the burden on business? (Maximum 5 lines)

No. As projected in the IA, HR2015 has had little to no financial impacts on businesses over and above those brought by the HR2003. The Impact Assessment projected £0 net costs to businesses and evidence suggests that the costs of implementing HR2015 did not represent a heavy burden for the majority of businesses.

The survey respondents emphasized that in their responses: "The Regulation has been in place for a number of years in one form or another and businesses have adapted to its requirement over time putting in place specifications, testing and traceability to ensure compliance. While all this demands resource/management and is costly it is accepted and a necessary part of how we do business: One off financial cost to our business"

Specifically, members of the industry continue to support rules protecting the use of honey and honey type terms used.

7. For EU measures, how does the UK's implementation compare with that in other EU member states in terms of costs to business? (Maximum 5 lines)

N/A

