

To: Interested Parties

20th April 2011

Reference: NIP 1298

Updating the Honey Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (as amended)

Dear Interested Parties,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Honey Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (as amended) need to be updated to reflect changes in terminology arising out of the Treaty of Lisbon.

What was the 'European Community' became the 'European Union' as a consequence of the provisions in the Treaty of Lisbon. Generally, this means that references should no longer be made to the 'European Community' (or 'EC') and instead the phrase 'European Union' (or 'EU') must be used.

You will be aware that, where a blend of honeys has been harvested in more than one Member State or third country, the Honey Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (as amended) require the countries of origin to be given on the label or, alternatively, a specific reference to describe blended honey as being from the 'EC' or 'non EC' or from the 'EC and non EC'.

No relabelling will be required where a food business labels honey in a way which states the names of the countries of origin. However, where the option is used to refer on the label to, for instance, 'a blend of EC honeys' (for honey that originates from more than one Member State), the label will need to refer to 'a blend of EU honeys'. The 'EC' to 'EU' change will also apply to honey currently labelled as a 'blend of non-EC honeys' and 'blend of EC and non-EC honeys'.

Food businesses may, if they wish, make this change before the Honey Regulations are updated. We will update the Regulations as soon as possible. For example, if you are in the course of changing or redesigning your labels

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then you can go ahead and introduce this change. This is because a Member State must not apply its domestic law which has not been updated to take into account EU changes against a person who has complied with the EU provisions. Accordingly, enforcement authorities would have to take a pragmatic approach to this change being introduced as part of the normal relabelling cycle.

If you believe there will be any cost impact on your business as a result of this change to refer to the 'EU' rather than 'EC' on honey labels then it would be helpful if you could provide us with an estimate of the costs. Also if you feel that you will be able to absorb the costs as a result of any normal cycle of labelling changes then it would be very useful to know this too.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M N Briggs". The letters are cursive and connected.

Mervyn Briggs
Senior Executive Policy Officer
FSA in NI