



National Residue Survey 2020–21

Honey



The National Residue Survey (NRS) operates within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and since 1992 has been funded by industries through levies and direct contracts.

The NRS is an essential part of Australia's pesticide and veterinary medicine residue management framework providing verification of good agricultural practice in support of chemical control-of-use legislation and guidelines.

NRS programs monitor the levels of, and associated risks from, pesticides and veterinary medicine residues and contaminants in Australian food products. The programs help to facilitate and encourage ongoing access to domestic and export markets. NRS supports Australia's primary producers and food processors who provide quality animal, grain and horticulture products which meet both Australian and relevant international standards.

Honey program overview

The honey program has been operating for over a decade and is funded by the NRS component of the honey levy. The program involves the testing of Australian honey samples for a range of pesticides, veterinary medicines and environmental contaminants, which ensures the Australian honey industry can meet quality assurance and market access requirements for domestic and international markets.

Key points

- ▶ In 2020–21, the overall compliance with Australian standards was 100 percent for honey samples.
- ▶ Australian honey producers continue to demonstrate a high degree of good agricultural practice.
- ▶ The National Residue Survey's quality management system is ISO 9001:2015 certified.

Sample collection

The number of samples collected is based on Australian production levels and/or overseas export market requirements.

Samples are collected by government approved officers from randomly selected honey at processing establishments in accordance with NRS requirements.

Analytical screens

Analytical screens are developed in consultation with the industry and take into account chemicals registered in Australia, chemical residue profiles and overseas market requirements.

Honey samples are screened for a range of pesticides, veterinary medicines and environmental contaminants, as shown in Table 1.

Results

In 2020–21, a total of 129 honey samples were collected for analysis. The results were compared with the Australian standards and where appropriate, relevant international standards.

A summary of honey compliance with Australian standards over the past six years is provided in Table 2. The results highlight Australia's excellent compliance with Australian standards and help maintain the reputation and integrity of Australian honey in international and domestic markets.

The yearly summary datasets for the honey program are located on the department's website agriculture.gov.au/nrs-results-publications.



TABLE 1 Analytical screens for the honey program

Analytical screen	Chemical group	Analytes
Veterinary medicines and pesticides	Antimicrobials	includes aminoglycosides, macrolides, nitrofurans, phenicols, sulphonamides and tetracyclines
	Pesticides	includes fungicides, herbicides and insecticides
Environmental contaminants	Organochlorines	aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin, DDT, endrin, HCB, HCH, heptachlor, lindane, mirex, PCBs and pentachlorobenzene
	Metals	aluminium, lead, selenium and zinc

TABLE 2 Compliance rates for the past six years relative to Australian standards

Years	Samples collected	Compliance rates (%)
2015–16	126	98.41
2016–17	126	100
2017–18	126	98.4
2018–19	123	100
2019–20	126	100
2020–21	129	100



Laboratory selection and performance

The NRS contracts laboratories to analyse animal and plant product samples for pesticide/veterinary medicine residues and environmental contaminants.

Laboratories are selected through the Australian Government tendering process on the basis of their proficiency and value for money. Laboratories must be accredited to international standard ISO/IEC 17025 at commencement of testing.

Contracted laboratories are proficiency tested by the NRS to ensure the validity of their analytical results and technical competence.

The NRS has been accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities as a proficiency test provider since July 2005.



International export markets

The NRS maintains information on maximum residue limits (MRLs) that apply for Australia and major export markets for industries supported by the NRS. All analysis results are checked for compliance with Australian standards and relevant international MRLs.

For the Australian MRL standard see legislation.gov.au/Series/F2019L01105.

For MRL requirements for some international export markets see links at agriculture.gov.au/nrs-databases.



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