



National Residue Survey 2022–23

Honey



The National Residue Survey (NRS) operates within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 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. The 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.

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.

Key points

- In 2022-23, the overall compliance with Australian standards was 100% for honey samples.
- Australian honey producers continue to demonstrate a high degree of good agricultural practice.
- The National Residue Survey's quality management system (QMS) is certified to ISO standard 9001:2015.

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.

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

Results

In 2022-23, a total of 157 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 6 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 2. Compliance rates for the past 6 years relative to Australian standards

Years	Samples collected	Compliance rates (%)
2017–18	126	98.4
2018–19	123	100
2019–20	126	100
2020–21	129	100
2021–22	142	100
2022–23	157	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 procurement process based on 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.



Images courtesy of Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

International export markets

The NRS maintains information on maximum residue limits (MRLs) that apply to 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/F2023L01350



Image courtesy of Australian Honey Bee Industry Council



Australian Honey Bee
INDUSTRY COUNCIL



General enquiries

Phone 1800 900 090

Postal address

National Residue Survey
GPO Box 858, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia



agriculture.gov.au/nrs

Email nrs@aff.gov.au

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2024.



This publication is licensed by Commonwealth of Australia under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.