



# CZECH HONEY

## GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

The geographical indication "**Czech Honey**" in original language "**Český med**", is used for bee honey prepared by the Carniolan bee colony (*Apis mellifera carnica*) from sweet juices of flowers (nectar) or from secretion of live parts of plants or found on live parts of plants (honeydew) collected on the territory of the Czech Republic.

The type of honey is given by the **genotype of the honeybee** on the one hand and the variety **range of flora growing in the Czech Republic** on the other hand. A combination of these essential attributes gives "Czech Honey" its **unique composition**, which consists of the ratio of monosaccharides, the amount of pollen grains and mineral substances. Thus, the botanical origin given by the particular flora and the ecosystem diversity conditioned by the given territory have a strong impact on its organoleptic qualities and its specific characteristics.

The **firm requirements** for the content of water (18 % at most in all types), hydroxymethylfurfural (20 mg per one kg at most in all types) and saccharose (5 % at most in all types of honey) supports the quality and attributes of "Czech Honey" and differs it from products originating in other parts of the world.

The "Czech Honey" should fulfil the **additional criteria**, which are:

- ✓ productive bee colonies are reared exclusively on the territory of the Czech Republic,
- ✓ no addition of honey produced out of the territory of the Czech Republic is allowed,
- ✓ honeydew honey shows positive polarity before as well as after inversion,
- ✓ bee products are not contaminated by chemical substances, i.e. residues of pharmaceutical chemicals (the use of antibiotics and/or sulphonamides is forbidden by curing bees in the whole territory of the Czech Republic).

Thanks to the high level of active participation of beekeepers in the Czech Beekeeper's Association (over 97 %) it is possible to implement up-to-date methods of bee-keeping, achieve a good level of health protection of hives and ensure keeping of the bee colonies chiefly away from industrial areas.

The excellent reputation of the "Czech Honey" is also attributed to the **long tradition** of its production on the territory of the Czech Republic. In written documents we can find that honey has been produced in this area since as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Apiarian privileges were issued for Moravia and Silesia in 1775 and for Bohemia in 1776 (three parts of actual territory of the Czech Republic). In 1785, altogether 39 389 hives were registered in Bohemia, while in 1843 the number grew to 106 330. In modern era, in the year 2002, there were 52 768 apiaries in the Czech Republic, who kept a total of 517 743 hives.



The "Czech Honey" geographical indication may only be used for honey meeting all the criteria of **quality standard** of the Czech Beekeeper's Association, which are stricter than some of the physical and chemical requirements in the EU territory.

The quality standard of the Czech Beekeepers Association for "CZECH HONEY" (ČSV 1/1999 "ČESKÝ MED") sets down the following principles for meeting physical and chemical requirements in order to obtain and process high quality honey:

- ✓ honey first extracted in the season may not contain excessive amounts of sugar reserves processed during winter and/or during the season, there may be no residues from supplementary feeding by sugar that occurred during the dormancy period;
- ✓ honeycombs are only taken when honey is ripe and its water content drops below 19 percent, that is, at least one-third of the combs containing flower honey is wax-sealed and when given a jerk nothing splashes out;
- ✓ when processing (liquefying) honey, it should not be heated to temperatures greater than 50 °C and not longer than for 24 hours;
- ✓ the amount of saccharose in acacia honey is first measured after honey has been stored for two months at 18 to 22 °C.

The quality and characteristics attributable to the specification of the geographical indication "Czech Honey" are firmly **supervised** and **controlled** (by the Czech State Agriculture and Food Inspection). The physical and chemical parameters of "Czech Honey" are supervised by the inspection of Bee Research Institute. The bee-keeping and commercial honey processing is supervised also from the point of sanitary regulations (by the Czech State Veterinary Authority).

The product "Czech Honey" is labelled as "Český med". **Labelling** requirements consist also of indicating all the necessary data on the kind of honey (i.e. acacia, flower, forest, etc).

The reputation of geographical indication "Czech Honey" is supported by **activities of the Czech Beekeeper's Association**, which are aimed at suppressing false and deceptive information on origin of good, at providing information to the customer, at preventing unfair competition, at hindering falsification of honey by industrially produced substitutes (such as fructose syrups) and at preventing imports of poor-quality honey containing residue antibiotics and/or sulphonamides or pathogenic agents that are harmful to bees.

**Use of the geographical indication "Czech Honey" while respecting the rules of its application and control enables to protect interests of producers and consumers of honey.** The participation of beekeepers and honey producers in the Czech Beekeeper's Association facilitates the promotion of the reputation of the geographical indication "Czech Honey" and ensures meeting of all requirements for beekeeping and for good manufacturing practice. The honey consumers can thus rely on the high quality and the specific characteristics of every product, which is labelled "Czech Honey".