

# Natural Honey: Pakistan produces prime quality in the world

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Export of Natural Honey from Pakistan increased from Rs 466 million in 2011-12 to Rs 935 million in 2013-14, thus showing an average increase of 33% per annum. Pakistan mainly exports Honey to Saudi Arabia, UAE, USA, and Afghanistan.

Saudi Arabia is the largest importer with market share of about 75% while UAE and USA are second and third largest importers with shares of 10% and 6% respectively. Chakwal, Mianwali, Kark and Bannu districts are famous for the high quality of Honey .

The European Union (EU) is the world's largest consumer of honey. The EU consumes approximately 22% of the world's Honey production; however, they produce 50%. The majority of this Honey is imported from the developing world.

Pakistan was producing 298,000 tonnes of prime quality of Honey annually, while China is the largest exporter of Honey in the world. The quality which makes Pakistani Honey so special was that this type of Honey was made of the nectar by the honeybees extracted from the flowers of berry tree (Ziziphus) and fortunately berry trees are grown in abundance in the Potohar region.

In Chakwal, Mianwali, Kark and Bannu districts, these trees can be seen on the boundary line of every part of the land. Unlike many other trees, berry blossoms from mid-September to mid-October and this is the period when honeybees do wonders in their hives by the nectar extracted from the flowers. The researchers have proved that Honey made of the nectar of berry trees has higher medicinal value compared to

Honeys made of other flowers' nectars. When September approaches, the bee-keepers from different areas of the country rush towards the Potohar region and establish their colonies at deserted places besides roads.

Pakistan has exported 440 containers of honey to Gulf States during the financial year 2012-13 and in the year 2013-14 the volume was higher than the previous year. Pakistani Honey has big demand in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The price of one kilogram honey in international market in Pakistani rupee is Rs.1000/- and each container contains 20,000 kilogram of honey.

The fields of Chakwal have abundant of berry trees and the atmosphere of the area is also very ideal, said Naeem Qasmi, the President of Pakistan Beekeepers Association (PBA).

He said at least it takes one month to give final shape honeybees to their product. After harvesting Honey, the beekeepers take it to Tarnab, the hub of Honey trade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, from where it is sold to traders who export it to Arab countries. He was worried about the cutting of berry trees. The cutting of berry trees is going on without any check and if

**Table 1: Export of Natural Honey from Pakistan**

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Value Rs. Million
2011-12	1,393	466
2012-13	1,618	573
2013-14	1,612	935
2014-15	820	834

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

**Table 2: Import of Natural Honey from Pakistan**

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Value Rs. Million
2011-12	180	43
2012-13	266	61
2013-14	295	77
2014-15	400	91

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

it is not stopped, the business of Honey would be badly affected.

There were about 35,000 beekeeping farms in Pakistan but only 10,000 of them were registered with the PBA. The beekeepers find themselves in trouble whenever their bees are attacked by termites. In such a situation, they cannot find anti-termite medicines at reasonable prices. Currently Pakistan produces 298,000 tonnes of Honey annually but due to lack of proper rules and regulations the state and the beekeepers are not getting the full advantages of this product. According to a report, 20% of honey is lost every year due to untrained beekeepers.

**Exports:** Overall export of Natural Honey has witnessed a steady growth. Natural Honey exports were increased 1,393 tonnes worth Rs466 in 2011-12 to 1,612 tonnes worth Rs935 million in 2013-14, thus showing an average increase of 34% in terms of value per annum. However, during the year 2014-15 export decreased 11% to 820 tonnes worth Rs 834 million, due to low production. Exports of Natural Honey from Pakistan for the last four years are given in Table-1.

Pakistan exported Natural Honey to Saudi Arabia, UAE, USA, Afghanistan, Libya and China. Saudi Arabia is the biggest market for Pakistani Honey followed by UAE and USA. Country-wise exports of Natural Honey are given in Table-2.

**Imports:** Due to shortage of Honey production in the country, Pakistan imported Natural Honey from various countries. Natural Honey import increased from 180 tonnes worth Rs 43 million in 2011-12 to 400 tonnes worth Rs 91 million in 2014-15, thus showing an average increase of 28% in terms of value per annum. Imports of Natural Honey into Pakistan for the last four years are given in Table-3.

Pakistan imported Natural Honey from Germany (48% of total import), Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, France and UAE. Country-wise imports of Natural Honey are given in Table-4.

### World Production

The majority of the production of Honey takes place in developing countries, while the developed countries are the largest consumers. The leading producer of Honey is China, produced 436,000 tonnes in 2015. The second and third largest producers are Turkey and Argentina, produced 88,162 tonnes and 75,500 tonnes, respectively. Other rela-

tively large producers of Honey in the developing world include Ukraine, USA, Russia, India and Mexico. Top ten Natural Honey producing countries are given in Table-5.

Since the early 1960s, there has been a growing market in Europe, Japan, and the US for organic agricultural products which is produced in a sustainable manner and without the use of agrochemicals.

This growth is due to the increasing environmental awareness of consumers in mainly the EU, but to an increasing degree, Japan and the US. These consumers have been willing to pay premium prices for certified organic.

Around 300 varieties of flowers are suitable as floral sources for Honey, and naturally produced Honey reflects the local conditions and climate in a country to country. The most common types of Honey are:

**Acacia:** light in taste and has a refined scent. This type of Honey tends not to crystallise. The largest producer of Acacia Honey is China.

**Orange blossom:** Honey with a refreshing, bittersweet flavour. Mexico and the US are the main producers of Orange blossom Honey.

**Buckwheat:** This Honey has a strong smell and tastes similar to brown sugar. China is the main producer.

**Table 4: Country-wise Import of Natural Honey**  
Quantity: Tonnes  
Value: Rs. 000

Country	2014-15		2013-14	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Germany	201	44,111	108	27,584
Saudi Arabia	143	32,605	54	11,707
Malaysia	131	4,475	--	--
France	285	6,271	110	32,619
U.A.E	4	931	1	314
All Others				
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>90,889</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>76,993</b>

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

**Lotus:** Honey with a mellow, sweet flavour and a faint smell of flowers. China is also the largest producer of this type of honey.

**Clover:** This is the most widely produced and well-known type of Honey. Canada, the US, Argentina and Australia are the main producers of Clover Honey.

The European Union (EU) is the world's largest consumer of Honey. The EU consumes approximately 22% of the world's Honey production; however, EU produced about 50% of total domestic consumption. The majority of this Honey is imported from the developing world.

Global Natural Honey exports during the 2015 totaled US\$2.3 billion, up by an average 38.3% for all natural Honey shippers over the five-year period starting in 2011 when natural Honey shipments were valued at \$1.7 billion. The value of global natural Honey exports fell by 0.6% from 2014 to 2015.

Among continents, European countries accounted for the highest dollar value worth of natural Honey exports.

**Table 3: Country-wise Export of Natural Honey**  
Quantity: Tonnes  
Value: Rs. 000

Country	2014-15		2013-14	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Saudi Arabia	479	606,708	1,188	702,501
U.A.E	96	82,673	176	92,333
U.S.A	87	37,444	108	61,593
Afghanistan	76	34,771	12	7,105
Libya	28	27,010	66	36,942
China	18	13,337	1	94
Malaysia	7	5,157	10	6,411
Tunisia	5	4,142	--	--
Canada	6	4,591	2	1,856
Mozambique	3	3,300	5	2,301
All Others	15	14,397	44	23,851
<b>Total</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>833,530</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>934,987</b>

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.



during 2015 with shipments amounting to \$826.4 million or 35.2% of international Honey sales. This percentage compares with 28.7% from Asian exporters, 15.6% from Latin American and Caribbean suppliers, and 9.9% from each of Oceania (mostly Australia followed by New Zealand) and North America. African sources furnished just 0.4% of Natural Honey exports. Exports of Natural Honey by major countries during the year 2015 are given in Table-6.

**Problems:** There were about 35,000 beekeeping farms in Pakistan in which only 10,000 of them were registered with

the PBA. The beekeepers find themselves in trouble whenever their bees are attacked by termites. According to a report, 20% of Honey is lost every year due to untrained beekeepers. Pakistan is producing best quality Honey despite the fact that beekeeping industry is facing a number of problems.

Ghulam Sarwar, Scientific officer at Honeybee Research Institute, said Pakistan is producing best quality Honey despite the fact that beekeeping industry is facing a number of problems. Honey extracted from the tree of berry and from plant of Kalonji is the best but pathetically the trees of berry are being cut down in Chakwal district which is a very discouraging sign for the industry.

The beekeeping colonies are feared to be washed away by the current floods and beekeepers could face heavy loss and government in this connection should make arrangements to rehabilitate them. He further said that demand of Honey in international market particularly in Gulf is manifold higher than the present supply. For increase in the production, he called for the plantation of berry plants in open places to provide feeding for the bees. In this connection, he especially stressed the active role of forest and agricul-

**Table 6: Major Natural Honey Exporter Countries-2015**

Country	Value US \$ Million	% of Total Exports
China	288.7	12.3 %
New Zealand	199.3	8.5 %
Argentina	163.6	7.0 %
Mexico	156.0	6.6 %
Germany	139.4	5.9 %
India	121.7	5.2 %
Vietnam	111.4	4.7 %
Spain	101.5	4.3 %
Ukraine	95.9	4.1 %
Belgium	83.4	3.5 %
Brazil	81.7	3.5 %
Hungary	79.3	3.4 %
Canada	52.1	2.2 %
Thailand	47.5	2.0 %
Romania	46.0	2.0 %

ture departments. The cutting of berry trees is going on without any check and if it is not stopped, the business of honey would be badly affected.

### References

1. Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Govt. of Pakistan
2. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.
3. Pakistan Economic Survey- 2014-15, Government of Pakistan.
4. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan. ◆

**Table 5: Top Ten Natural Honey producing Countries**

Rank	Country	Production (\$ 000)	Production (Tonnes)
1	China	1,094,110	446,000
2	Turkey	221,236	88,162
3	Argentina	189,461	75,500
4	Ukraine	175,996	70,139
5	U.S.A	167,428	66,720
6	Russian Federation	162,856	64,898
7	India	153,075	61,000
8	Mexico	147,057	58,602
9	Iran	120,452	48,000
10	Ethiopia	115,195	45,905

