

AN APPARATUS FOR THE QUICK DIAGNOSIS OF FORGED HONEY

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Introduction

In Venezuela, the honey forging with cane sugar is very common. This affects the honey market and the folk medicine, which uses natural honey in many recipes. For various reasons, in the Food Department of our National Agencies, the sanitary control is very precarious as regards this problem and high frequency of forged honeys helps the fact that natural honey is not well known neither by the consumer nor by the seller.

In 1986, a better knowledge of honey was initiated in order to better protect it against forging, fact achieved, in practice, by means of a poster for the "Sun Market". In 1988, we inaugurated the National Beekeeping Museum "Ignacio Herera", in which we have a demonstrative compartment, where we show the difference between natural and forged honey. In 1992, we presented a simple and rapid method of detection of forged honey in Venezuela.

Material and Method

The proposed method was suggested to us after analyzing 500 samples of commercial honey from Venezuela, by noticing a different rheological behaviour of the natural honeys and of the forged ones. The laboratory analyses were thus elaborated so that they were simple to be handled by the honey consumers who, in general, are not used to chemistry. For the proposed test, we projected a special tube for the measurement of honey and of the reactives, for their mixing and for the constatation of certain observations which decided whether the honey was natural or not.

Also, the initial reactives were used to facilitate the answer of the test. Various "interface" phenomena took place between the reactives and the honey samples and, in 5 minutes, we received the answer... *natural or forged*.

Results and Discussions

A test was elaborated for easier detection of honey forging in Venezuela and a practical apparatus, easy to manipulate even at home, was adopted. There are two patents for this device: one in Italy, the other in Venezuela. Even if the proposed apparatus offers the possibility to reject forged honey by the sellers or even by the buyers, it is not yet at their disposal, because a team of people is necessary to produce and to sell it. I must say we had a great satisfaction to have found a temporary solution to help the individual control of honey forgers in Venezuela, but it will be very bad if this proposal will not be used by those interested.

This apparatus was elaborated as a consequence of the question asked numberless times by the population "How can I recognize natural honey?". I would like to thank Ciro Berneski and Luigi Vit for their useful advice as regards the patenting process.