

EU rules that honey containing GM pollen will not require a label

The European Parliament has [endorsed](#) draft rules defining pollen as a natural constituent of honey, rather than an ingredient. This means that GM pollen does not have to be labeled unless it makes up more than 0.9% of the honey. The full Parliament rejected a proposal by the environment committee to consider GM pollen as an ingredient rather than a natural constituent of honey, in line with a Court of Justice ruling in 2011. According to EU legislation, there is a huge difference between an ingredient and a constituent. An ingredient is part of a mixture and, as far as GMOs are concerned, would be subject to GMO labeling regulations. Pollen is naturally part of honey and comprises between 0.005 and 0.05% of honey and thus labeling would never be required.

Despite the clarification that, in the EU, pollen is a constituent of honey, not an ingredient, there are several issues that remain unresolved about honey and pollen. This article identifies and discusses these unresolved issues

Issue 1: What authorization is required for pollen from GM-crop sources?

Issue 2: What is the measurement for GM-pollen, from approved GM-crops, in honey?

Issue 3: Impact of the EU pollen in honey dispute and clarification on EU international legal obligations?

Issue 4: What does “natural” mean?

As one can anticipate, those who adamantly oppose GM content are unlikely to accept a “natural” label on honey whenever the honey contains GM pollen content, no matter how minuscule the percentage; to those opponents, “GM” and “natural” are mutually exclusive categories. Assuredly this dispute about the purity of honey is a dispute that is forthcoming in the EU.

While the present authors likely have not thought of all the unresolved issues about pollen and honey in the EU, we have raised four of them which we consider significant.

Read the full, original article: [Honey containing GM-pollen in Europe](#)