

TIPS for Honey Show preparation

What the judges look for...

Glass - show jar should be clean - no lint, dust, fingerprints or smears -

TIP: hand wash in very hot water and dry upside down - after filling use silk or soft lint free cloth and inspect with flashlight - don't touch with bare hands after cleaning

Closure - lid should be perfect and not damaged or scratched. No tamper seals!

TIP: use only new lids and bring a few spare lids to show

Honey on underside of lid - should be none -

TIP: cover jar with plastic film under lid until time to hand to show steward

Under filled - should be no air gap showing when lid is on

TIP: overfill when initially filling to take down to correct level when skimming

Over filled - should be exactly level to the top of the fill ring, not above

TIP: do a careful final check before handing to show steward

Foreign objects in honey - should be well strained and free of debris

TIP: inspect with flashlight, strain when warm through a fine nylon mesh cloth (doubled)

Air bubbles in honey - should be none, should be clear -

TIP: inspect with flashlight, don't wait til last minute to fill jars... prep ahead to allow bubbles to settle up to surface and skim off - warm jars before filling

Foam or air bubbles on surface - should be none -

TIP: inspect with flashlight, use baby spoon to skim or plastic wrap to pull off surface

Dust or particles on surface - should be none -

TIP: inspect with flashlight, use baby spoon to skim or plastic wrap to pull off surface

Crystals in honey - should be none

TIP: inspect with flashlight, use fresh honey for show and warm slightly to remove any crystals

Moisture content should be 18.6% or under

TIP: test with refractometer

Aroma - should be detectable and pleasant

TIP: use your very best honey, don't overheat honey or use fermenting honey

Flavor - depends on varietal should be fresh and pleasant

TIP: use your very best honey, don't overheat honey or use fermenting honey

Preparing your entry for honey show
By Diane Spoden from Virginia Webb method

GOAL:

3 identical, perfectly filled jars of crystal clear honey with no bubbles, crystals or suspended debris visible when light shone through.
Surface of honey should be free of any dust, debris, wax, foam or bubbles Glass jars should be free of lint, smudges, fingerprints and should have a scratch free clean closure with no honey on underside of lid

ITEMS NEEDED

Fresh Honey
4 Show jars - read the rules for jar requirements. Usually queenline or Gamber classic 1lb..select good jars with no flaws..
4 Clean scratch free lids for show jars (extras too)
Good flashlight
2 x quart Mason jars
Fine nylon mesh cloth for straining honey
Rubber band
Plastic wrap
Silk scarf or soft lint free cloth
Metal teaspoon and cup with scalding water
Tea towel
Water bath (warm water in pan)or heat pad

METHOD

Watch Virginia Webbs Youtube on honey prep

Start process 2-3 weeks ahead of show

Read the Honey show rules pertaining to your category .

After you've extracted let your honey settle in the bucket for 2 or 3 days so bubbles, particles and wax come to the top

Fill a wide mouth mason jar from your honey gate - fill the jar to the very top, place a lid and leave for a couple of weeks to settle again

Some recommend that the jars get placed upright in a box and put in car trunk in warm weather for a few weeks to help jostle the bubbles and wax to the top

When you are ready to fill your jars for competition: minimum 1 week before

Select jars that conform to rules (American standard is queenline or Gamber classic 1lb jars)

Clean 4 show jars thoroughly - hand wash in very hot water - drain dry upside down - don't use towel to dry the inside (leaves lint which can show up in the honey)

Slightly warm through the honey in the mason jar that you previously filled in a hot water bath (never microwave) or heating pad until just warmed through

Take a fine mesh nylon cloth, doubled and secure with a rubber band over another empty mason jar and strain the warmed honey into it

Meanwhile, warm your empty show jars in a water bath or heating pad making sure no moisture gets on the inside of the jars

Then pour the strained honey into warm show jars and fill to the VERY TOP

Cover jars with plastic wrap and leave to settle and cool for a few days

A few days later remove the lid and plastic wrap and skim the top of the jar (a baby spoon heated in hot water then dried works, taking any debris or bubbles off the top and bringing it to well below correct level... at this point clean the inside glass of air space, then fill to correct level from spare 4th jar which should be at the same temperature as the honey you are backfilling

Make sure the fill level is perfect...daylight should not be seen through the jar when the lid is on... do not fill above the "fill ring"

Inspect again throughly with a strong flashlight for any foreign particles, foam, bubbles, crystals etc

Re-cover the jar with fresh plastic wrap and place cap over plastic wrap (not too tight)

Clean jar of all fingerprints and smudges using a silk scarf or lint free soft cloth

Inspect outside of jar with good flashlight for fingerprints or smears on glass jar

From this point handle the jars with lint free or nitrile gloves on - Keep upright

Transport show jars with plastic film and just before entry remove plastic film and replace lid (this keeps the lid clean)...check cleanliness of jar with flashlight after transporting ... bring extra new lids in case of damage - GOOD LUCK!

