

Preparing Your Honey for Fair Judging

The SWW Fair publishes an exhibitors guide each summer for that year's fair; it is important to review the guidelines for open class. You will fill out a registration form online after reading the Open Class Handbook for the current year. Honey is under Department G Agriculture. Entry day(s) and time(s) are noted in the outlined box under the Superintendent's name at the beginning of that section. Pickup day(s) and time(s) are also noted on that section. It is important to pick your entries up on the specified days in order to not have your honey or other display items discarded.

You will bring your entry to the fair at the designated time to the Floral Building and present it to the LCBA members there to receive entries. Bring your honey in a 1 pound Queenline jar (available free to LCBA members at meetings prior to the fair). It is important to clean the outside of your jar once you have filled it, then wrap it in a towel or put it in a paper bag to bring in – you lose points for fingerprints on the jar! The jar lid seal must also be clean, so don't tip your jar during transport! The judging sheets for jar honey and cut comb honey are on this page.

Moisture content is an important factor; you need to submit honey that was fully capped. A refractometer can be used to test your honey prior to entry; a simple refractometer can be purchased for around \$20. Moisture content should be between 15.5 and 18.6. It should not be crystalized, and free of debris – most beekeepers filter their sample with a 400 micron strainer.

You should allow several days after filling the jar to allow bubbles etc. to rise to the top. The sample should be slightly overfilled, as you will likely remove some foam and bubbles off the top once your jar has been allowed to set for several days. It works well to lay a small piece of plastic wrap on the top of the honey, then twist it and lift it off; you may need to repeat this process a couple of times. Accuracy of filling is also important; judges use a toothpick marked at 3/8 and 1/2 inch to measure accuracy of filling from the top of the rim.

The judges (at least two) are LCBA members trained to judge and who wear gloves from taking in the entry to completion of judging to be certain they aren't adding any fingerprints to the jar. Moisture content is measured with a digital refractometer; flavor is tested by dipping a clean toothpick into the sample after filling is measured. Cleanliness is assessed by looking through each jar with a polariscope that has a magnifying screen attached, allowing judges to see contaminants in the sample. Completed scoring sheets are attached to each jar's entry form for fair judges (non LCBA) to assign award ribbons.

In addition to the judging process, or if you don't want to enter a jar for fair judging, you can provide a small sample of your honey to LCBA members who are at the fair booth to enter the 'tasters choice' contest. This is generally held on one day of the fair. These jars are available for all fairgoers to sample and vote for their favorite. Winner gets tasters choice bragging rights!



Southwest Washington Fair

Lewis County Beekeepers Association Honey

Judging Scorecard

Entry number:		
Color category via Jack's scale	Available Points	Awarded Points
Container appearance - 10 points		
a) no fingerprints, dirt or smudges etc. on jar	5	
b) lid seal free of honey, rim of jar clean, etc.	5	
Moisture content - 20 maximum		
a) Less than 16.0	0	
b) 15.5 - 17.0	20	
c) 17.1 - 18.0	15	
d) 18.1 - 18.5	10	
e) greater than 18.6	0	
Crystals - 10 points		
no crystals or granules present	10	
Cleanliness of honey - 40 points		
a) without foam or bubbles	8	
b) without lint or dirt	8	
c) without other debris, etc.	8	
d) without wax	8	
e) without bee body parts	8	
Flavor - 10		
a) free from fermentation smell or taste	5	
b) free from scorched/burned flavor	5	
Accuracy of jar filling - 10		
Precise filling - head room between 3/8 and 1/2 inch with no visible gap between honey level and cap	10	
Total Points Available and Awarded	100	

Judges Comments:



Lewis County Beekeepers Association

Comb Honey Judging Scorecard

Entry Number	Available Points	Awarded Points
Accuracy of Cut edge: square, 4 parallel sided cuts	15	
Neatness of cut edge: no ragged edges	15	
Uniform depth and filling of cells, even appearance	15	
All cells complete: absence of uncapped cells	15	
Clean dry cappings: no pollen, no leaking cappings	15	
Uniform color of honey	15	
Cleanliness and general appearance of package	10	
Total Points Available and Awarded	100	

Judges comments:



Under filled jar with bubbles visible



Properly filled, no bubbles visible



Comb honey in clamshell container