



Unique Mānuka Factor™
Honey Association

New Zealand Mānuka Honey – Accept No Imitations

Independent testing reveals that honey producers outside New Zealand are supplying non-authentic mānuka honey.

With the continuous growth in demand for New Zealand mānuka honey around the world has come a surge of honey producers outside New Zealand mistakenly claiming they are producing the same honey to take advantage of the growing popularity of this category.

Known as the liquid gold of the honey world, New Zealand mānuka honey is a highly sought-after superfood with remarkable health properties that set it apart from other honeys so, it is no surprise it has become a target for imitation and misrepresentation.

Why does it matter where your mānuka honey comes from? There is a body of research developed over 40 years across more than 500 papers that has built a clear picture of the health properties delivered by New Zealand mānuka honey, the New Zealand mānuka tree and shown not to be replicable in honeys from other countries.

Variability in honey composition and bio-activity means it matters to consumers what they buy. If various honey from all around the world is included under the name mānuka consumers would no longer be able to identify honey that is genuinely beneficial, supported by evidence and which is just another honey.

To understand how widespread the issue of mislabeled honey is, the [Unique Mānuka Factor Honey Association](#) (UMFHA) the world's only independent mānuka honey standards organization, recently sourced and independently tested more than 40 honey samples originating from seven countries outside New Zealand and claiming to be mānuka honey.

The authenticity of all honey samples was tested in independent laboratories with expertise in identifying and assessing mānuka honey.

100% of the honey samples failed to meet the New Zealand government mānuka honey identification test, according to the [Ministry for Primary Industries \(MPI\)](#) definition, which is based on the concentration of four chemical markers and a DNA marker. These labelling guidelines were designed to give customers and consumers of New Zealand mānuka honey greater clarity on how to identify genuine mānuka honey.

The samples were tested for mānuka DNA four chemical parameters via a second method.

According to the MPI definition, if the chemical and DNA markers are all above threshold levels, then the honey is deemed to be mānuka honey.

Genuine mānuka honey from New Zealand must meet the following test criteria. A single fail means it is not mānuka honey:

- Leptosperin, a critical marker of authenticity in New Zealand mānuka honey, produced only by the mānuka tree, that enters the bloodstream when consumed and is shown to be anti-inflammatory
- Methylglyoxal (MGO), the source of golden mānuka honey's special antibacterial properties and an important potency measure
- 4-Hydroxyphenyllactic acid (4'HPLA) >1
- 2-Methoxybenzoic acid (2'MBA) >1
- 2'-Methoxy acetophenone (2'MAP) >5
- 3-Phenyllactic acid (3'PLA) >400

These are the most comprehensive tests available to identify authentic mānuka honey and validate its potency and purity. The results proved none of the honey samples were produced from nectar sourced from New Zealand's native leptospermum scoparium or mānuka tree.



International “Manuka” Honey Failing Quality Testing

Genuine health outcomes require authentic natural health products supported by research. Decades of research has demonstrated the benefits of mānuka honey derived from the New Zealand mānuka tree, *Leptospermum scoparium*.

Any honey from another country labelled mānuka misleads consumers as they are a different composition to New Zealand mānuka honey.

Recently a leading laboratory tested **41 brands** labelled ‘mānuka honey’ that were not from New Zealand.

Each sample was tested for authenticity against New Zealand government mānuka honey classification tests.

41/41

brands failed the NZ monofloral Mānuka honey test and were classified as non-mānuka honey.

32/41

brands had no detectable mānuka DNA* at all and 3 were inconclusive.

**conclusive detection of *Leptospermum scoparium* DNA.*

32%

of samples failed the potency label claim.

MGO typically decreases during the products shelf life.

82%

of samples failed the CODEX quality requirement of <40mg/kg HMF.

41/41

brands failed 2'-MAP

26/41

brands failed 4-HPLA

In summary

Non-New Zealand products labelled ‘mānuka honey’ are not mānuka honey.

They are misleading consumers, distributors and retailers alike passing their product off as authentic mānuka honey.

The US Pharmacopeia’s Food Fraud Database identifies honey to be the third most faked food product globally. Therefore, it is not surprising to find widespread misuse of mānuka honey labelling.

Mislabeled Matters for Customers and Consumers

Honeys from outside New Zealand claiming to be 'mānuka' are implying a natural health benefit that they simply cannot back up due to the honeys being undefined and so unsupported by significant scientific research. Consequently distributors, retailers and consumers are being misled when being sold a mānuka honey from any country other than New Zealand.

Forty years of research producing over 500 studies on New Zealand's *Leptospermum scoparium* tree and the mānuka honey produced from it, have identified established and emerging natural health benefits and possible future benefits of genuine New Zealand mānuka honey. Areas of great interest to health researchers include wound healing, sore throats, gut health, lung health, managing side effects of chemotherapy, antibiotic resistance and skin health, among others.

Why Purchasing Quality New Zealand Mānuka Honey Really Matters

Around the world New Zealand mānuka honey is valued for properties that support health and wellness.

Researchers continue to identify new areas of potential health applications for New Zealand mānuka honey.

People looking for natural support for their health and wellness are deprived of the genuine benefits when imitators falsely claim to be supplying mānuka honey.

All 40 honeys from outside New Zealand claiming to be 'mānuka' failed the MIP authenticity test and so were making a label claim that they could help consumers in the same way as New Zealand mānuka honey. Clearly consumers and customers of the honey brands are being misled and asked to pay a premium for a product that will not deliver on it implied benefit to the user.

Consumers are buying these imitation honeys under the impression they have the same potential health properties as genuine New Zealand mānuka honey, anticipating the benefits they might expect from real mānuka.

Nothing Compares to New Zealand Mānuka

Mānuka honey is the most complex honey known. Research over many years has identified more than 2,000 unique chemical markers that set honey harvested from New Zealand *Leptospermum scoparium* apart from any other honey produced in the world.

This unique chemical footprint includes the components underpinning the natural anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties that make New Zealand mānuka honey so effective in supporting health and general wellness.

When buying natural health products consumers need to be able to trust the product will perform as promised on the label and that it comes from a quality source.

They purchase mānuka honey with the expectation it will support the health and wellness of themselves and their families. They need to know they are buying a product that contains the natural, bio-active components increasingly shown to have known and emerging natural health benefits, including skin, gut and immune health support stemming from antibacterial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

With interest in the benefits of mānuka honey on the rise it really matters what honey you buy.



WOUND HEALING

Combats infections and promotes healing of topical wounds



SORE THROAT

Provides relief for sore throats caused by bacteria and natural relief for side effect of aggressive throat therapies



GUT HEALTH

Research and reports to date indicate mānuka may help bacterial and inflammatory conditions in the gut



LUNG HEALTH

Research is emerging that mānuka honey may help combat bacteria common in some lung conditions



ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Potential applications helping combat antibiotic resistant bacteria that support healing



SKIN HEALTH

Research indicates that mānuka honey contains anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties which may help with skin conditions such as eczema

Mānuka Honey is the most complex honey known by researchers to date. Research over many years has identified more than 2,000 chemical markers that create a unique set of bioactive synergies.

Mānuka honey is a living product, rich in amino acids, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, proteins and bioactive compounds. Mishandling can affect its activity and shelf life, so great care is necessary to ensure consumers around the world are delivered a product of exceptional quality with the full health benefits they would expect from New Zealand mānuka honey.

Consumers, retailers and wholesalers should be confident they are getting the real deal when they buy a jar of honey labelled 'mānuka.' When they use it and do not receive any benefits, it damages the reputation of the product and the industry. Ultimately, this could result in New Zealand's access to markets being put at risk or losing the premium price which New Zealand mānuka honey commands overseas.

Mānuka - A Millenia of Healing

An important part of this story is our uniquely versatile mānuka tree. Its history goes back to the very creation of this beautiful land, Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Māori, who named mānuka, called it a taonga or 'treasure' and have used the tree for a millennia because of its remarkable properties. Traditional uses included infusions made with its leaves to reduce fever, treat stomach ailments and alleviate urinary problems. Its gum was an effective moisturizer for burns and eased coughing. Bark decoctions were a sedative, a mouthwash and treated diarrhea.

From Captain Cook's tea to modern day skin balm.

Europeans were also quick to discover its uses when they arrived in Aotearoa-New Zealand. On Captain Cook's voyages his crew boiled its leaves to make tea. They even brewed mānuka beer, described as "exceedingly palatable and esteemed by everyone on board".

Today, along with the identification of the bioactivity of mānuka honey, essential oils from mānuka leaves are found in all sorts of health and wellness products. While the tree's unique properties continue to be researched by scientists all around the world.

Our Place & a Very Special Tree

An important part of this story is our uniquely versatile mānuka tree. Its history goes back to the very creation of this beautiful land, Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Ranginui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother) were locked in an eternal embrace. Their children became frustrated with the cramped conditions and decided to separate their parents — Tāne Mahuta (god of the forests) lay on his back and forced his parents apart. He adorned Ranginui with the sun, moon and the stars. He also cloaked his mother with trees. Tāne Mahuta had a union with Tawake-toro which gave rise to Mānuka. Tāne Mahuta also introduced all our native tree species, native birds and insects.

In modern times the mānuka tree is also recognised as giving life to the forest, because it produces low cover under which the giants of New Zealand's bush become established and then grow to become the home of our famous birdlife.

Source – Te Ara, Encyclopaedia of New Zealand

A Pōpokotea on a mānuka shrub
Tiritiri Matangi, New Zealand



Overcoming Confusion in the Honey Aisle



From the supermarket aisle to online shopping, the burden falls on the consumer to tell the authentic mānuka honey from the fake.

Consumers find it difficult to cut through the confusion in the mānuka honey aisle, with nearly half of them (44%) not knowing which one to buy due to a wide range of conflicting grading systems and ambiguous number ratings.

The UMFHA is currently working with its members to inform consumers and trade channels on what sets the UMF system apart from any other measurements or gradings in the market.

At the heart of this is the UMF™ quality mark. No other comprehensive quality system exists. Perhaps more importantly it is independent and committed to traceability and transparency so that any buyer or purchaser can quickly and easily assess if the honey in front of them meets potency, shelf life, authenticity, purity, freshness, free from additives and traceability standards. In other words, it is assured for the life of the product.

Making the connection between the UMF quality mark and fresh mānuka honey from New Zealand will help drive purchase decisions in a category which is confusing for shoppers. It is the independent quality certification sought after by mānuka honey brands seeing to test their product against the highest recognized quality standards.

Comparing the Worlds Only Independent Mānuka Honey Quality Certification with Alternatives.

	UMF™	MGO	K-Factor	NPA	MGS	TA	Pollen
100% Government Certified New Zealand Mānuka Honey	✓	○	○	○	✓	○	○
Authenticated Purity	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Independent Quality Certification	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Four factor testing and rating	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
MGO Rated	✓	✓	○	○	○	○	○
Packed and sealed in New Zealand	✓	○	✓	○	○	○	○
Independent batch tracing	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Independent testing network	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Globally recognised standard	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Shelf life validated	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leptosperin	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○
Non peroxide activity	✓	○	○	✓	○	○	○

Only one quality or grading system provides a comprehensive quality assurance certification and grading system.

The UMFHA supports this the UMF™ quality assurance system with promotional and educational material available to customers around the world. Simply contact the UMFHA to find out more at enquiry@umf.org.nz. Further information can also be easily accessed at www.umf.org.nz



How UMF™ Helps You Identify the Right Mānuka Honey

The UMF™ Honey Association ensures that strong standards are put around the fast growing mānuka honey industry.

UMF™ was developed as a quality mark and rating to independently certify New Zealand mānuka honey.

It is recognised internationally as the only testing regime that can validate mānuka potency, authenticity, purity, shelf life and freshness for honey producers, brands and consumers around the world.

It is for this reason the UMF quality mark and rating are so powerful. It bundles up everything you need to know about the quality and rating of a mānuka honey product in one simple quality mark.

The UMFHA quality mark is the easiest way to recognise if a pot of mānuka honey is from New Zealand and has been tested to contain the necessary components to support good health.

Look for the following to make sure you are purchasing authentic New Zealand mānuka honey:



1	Registered trade mark, can only be used by licensed UMFHA members worldwide.	4	Traceable product batch certification number.
1	Independent quality certification.	5	Country of origin statement.
2	Testing key component levels including leptosperin and MGO and quality factors ensuring New Zealand origin, freshness, purity and shelf life.	6	MGO content statement. MGO is not a rating but 1 of 2300+ components in mānuka honey.
3	UMFHA quality statement.		

For More Information visit: umf.org.nz



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