

Members' Update



UNIQUE MANUKA FACTOR®
HONEY ASSOCIATION

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"Presentation Update"

MPI provides its update to the
Primary Production Select
Committee

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forefront when it comes
to what's required by
the MPI.*

UMFHA Presentation to Primary Production Select Committee Gains Traction

Following on from the Association's presentation to the Primary Production Select Committee on 15 October, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) was asked by the Committee Chair, Ian McKelvie MP, to provide

information on Manuka Honey certification. Distilling the six-page briefing provided by MPI, it is pleasing to note that the UMFHA science programme, spear-headed by the Manuka ID project, is in line with all the key points raised by

the MPI. In fact, our work is at the forefront when it comes to what's required by MPI. The work done by Dr Jonathan Stephens and Dr Terry Braggins, in particular, plus many others is world-leading in this area.

As a comparison, the following provides some interesting examples of what has been formally documented by MPI and what the UMFHA currently has in place.

MPI Document			UMFHA
Point 4	Need for a "...robust science-based definition for Manuka honey."		The Association has ensured a strong, fundamental science-based methodology in its research programme.
Point 8	In scope: Identify key characteristics ... that are:	stable	The leading key marker – Leptosperin - is stable. Other key markers identified also appear stable at this stage.
		cost effective to test	Testing facilities provide a 4-in-1 test which integrates testing for Leptosperin with existing quality markers.
		limit counterfeiting	Using a combination of unique markers makes it exceedingly difficult to counterfeit.

- *As part of the Association's programme, we are protecting these key signature compounds for the New Zealand industry.*
- *This has provided a model of possible bioactivity arising from some of these markers. It also offers a potential framework for other country's to follow, when it comes to developing their honey industries.*
- *We have developed a prototype indicator test that can support beekeepers, manufacturers, marketers and consumers.*
- *With support from a top scientific team, our Association's research programme is recognised as world-leading.*
- *Dr Jonathan Stephens collecting nectar.*

Point 11	"...methylglyoxal is not necessarily unique to Manuka Honey, is unstable, ...can easily be added as an adulterant..."	We recognised this, and captured other unique characteristics of Manuka Honey not subject to these issues.
Point 12	"... traditional laboratory techniques are not able to distinguish between pollen from Manuka and pollen from kanuka"	The scoping exercise for our research recognised this fact from the outset. Furthermore, even if you could distinguish between them, pollen count cannot be used to quantify if a honey is Manuka, nor manage the variables that occur in manufacturing which have an impact on pollen count.
Point 21	"Phase 1 is focused on determining the specificity or uniqueness of key biological characteristics...from either the pollen or the nectar of the plant species, <i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> (Manuka)"	Dr Jonathan Stephens formed the proposition that if you understand the nectar, you will understand the honey. This is a core principle to the Association's research programme.
Point 28	"These challenges also suggest that reliance on a single characteristic to authenticate Manuka Honey will not be possible"	The Association's programme involves looking at a number of characteristics that are stable, abundant, and easily tested to authenticate genuine Manuka.

