

## **European court rules beekeepers must prove GM pollen is not an ingredient of honey**

Beekeepers face being driven out of business by a European court ruling that pollen must be listed as an ingredient of honey.

The judgment by the European Court of Justice means that all jars of honey may have to be relabelled to show that they contain pollen, which manufacturers will have to prove is not genetically modified.

Patrick Robinson, the factory manager at Rowse Honey, Britain's biggest supplier of retail honey, said: "Honey has always contained pollen.

"Beekeepers don't put pollen in honey as an ingredient. Bees put it in there because it gets stuck to them when they are foraging.

"To say honey contains pollen is like saying peanuts contain nuts. There is a tiny amount of GM pollen all around the world now. But beekeepers do not tend to put their hives next to cultivated crops.

"I would be surprised if you found significant amounts of GM pollen in anyone's honey in this country."

Honey has always been considered an entirely pure product for the purposes of food labelling laws. But Europe's highest court has now decreed that pollen is an ingredient of honey rather than an intrinsic, natural component.

Rowse estimates that relabelling and testing all its products will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. Industry experts warned that the "ludicrous" ruling could drive smaller British honey suppliers and beekeepers out of business.

The sticky situation arose after a German amateur beekeeper found small amounts of GM pollen in his honey.

He sued the State of Bavaria, which owned trial GM maize plots near his hives, and the case went all the way to the ECJ.

Suppliers of honey whose pollen is found to be more than 0.9 per cent GM will have to undergo full safety authorisation and label their honey accordingly.

Source: NZTE/The Telegraph