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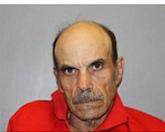
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It's a honey trap! Half of 'liquid gold' manuka sold on the high street 'is fake', experts warn

- British shoppers are wasting around £20million a year on the 'liquid gold'
- Produce purportedly has anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties
- Up to 3,000 tonnes a year produced in New Zealand but 6,500 tonnes sold be retailers

By SEAN POULTER CONSUMER AFFAIRS EDITOR FOR THE DAILY MAIL

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Almost half the manuka honey sold on the high street is fake, a study suggests.

It means British shoppers are wasting around £20million a year on the 'liquid gold', which sells for £9 to £60 a jar because of its purported anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Around 2,500 to 3,000 tonnes of manuka honey is produced in New Zealand each year – but 6,500 tonnes is sold by retailers.

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Almost half the manuka honey sold on the high street is fake, a study suggests, meaning British shoppers are wasting around £20million a year on the 'liquid gold'

The UK's biggest brand, Rowse Honey estimates that 45 per cent of manuka sold in the UK might be fake.

To qualify, honey must contain a sufficient amount of Methylglyoxal, known as MGO.

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The popularity of the honey has been boosted by its association with famous names including Hollywood celebrities, the singer Katherine Jenkins and tennis star Novak Djokovic.

Such is demand that manufacturers often mix it with common honey producing cheaper, mass market, versions, while criminals have also cashed in by substituting low quality baker's honey.

Rowse funded independent tests on manuka and found consumers are paying high prices for products which have little of the prized active ingredient and one which should not even be described as honey.

The company argues that manuka is only authentic if it is produced in New Zealand from bees collecting nectar from the manuka tree and so contains a sufficient amount MGO.

In the UK, an NPA rating system – Non-Peroxide Activity - is often used on jars as an accurate measuring system and indication for the amount of MGO.

The tests by a laboratory called Minerva Scientific found that some premium-priced products claiming a high levels of 'activity' contained low levels of MGO – or none at all.

They found products sold by Harrods, The Manuka Doctor and Queen Bee Manuka all contained low levels of MGO, with Harvey Nichols' Manuka 15+ honey lacking in MGO altogether.

Harvey Nichols said its 'trusted suppliers... ensure that our manuka honey is 100 per cent authentic'.

The other firms did not respond to requests for comment.

Caroline Flack once smothered in manuka honey for photoshoot



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