

From Joe Carson:

Selling Honey

If you decide to sell your honey, there are several ways to do so. The way you choose to sell your honey depends on how much honey you have, the time and effort you want to spend selling it and how much profit you want to make. Our Honey in Alaska sells for about \$9.00 + per pound.

Processing Honey

Honey is sold as "extracted" honey - bottled, liquid honey that has been extracted from the combs; "comb" honey -honey still in its natural comb; and "chunk" honey - a bottled combination of extracted and comb. Honey extracting equipment for the hobbyist is specialized and represents a one-time investment of about \$500 for new equipment. Used equipment is often available at significant savings. These are the basic tools and procedures for extracting honey:

1. **Uncapping knife** - A heated knife for slicing off the cappings from combs of honey. An electric, non-heated, knife can be used as well.
2. **Uncapping tank** - A container for receiving the cappings. Wet cappings fall onto a screen, and honey drips through to the bottom of the tank and out a spigot. A plastic pail will do a good job for the small operator.
3. **Extractor** - A drum containing a rotating wire basket. Uncapped combs are placed in the basket and the basket is turned by hand or by motor. Honey is flung out of the combs onto the sides of the tank and drains through a spigot. These are available to SABA members to borrow.
4. **Strainer** - A mesh of coarse screen or cloth directly under the extractor spigot. This filters out large debris such as wax and dead bees. I start with a 600 micron filter.
5. **Storage tank** - A large tank with a spigot, or "honey gate," at the bottom. As honey settles in the tank, air bubbles and small debris rise to the top and can be skimmed off, allowing honey that is bottled from the honey gate to be clear and attractive. A plastic pail could be used if running a couple hives.

Sometimes extracted honey granulates. This is a natural process, and the honey is still perfectly edible. If bottled honey granulates, loosen the lid and

place the jar in a pan of water on a stove. Heat and stir the honey until it re-liquifies.

Comb honey requires little specialized equipment, so it is a good way for a new beekeeper to get started. Supply companies offer special comb honey supers for producing comb honey in round or square one-pound sections. "Cut-comb" honey is the easiest and least expensive honey to produce. With cut-comb, the entire comb is cut away from the frame then further cut into smaller sections and packaged in special plastic boxes. Regardless of these variations, all comb honey requires special extra-thin foundation. Freeze comb honey overnight before it is sold to kill any wax moth eggs and larvae. Chunk honey is made by placing a piece of cut comb honey in a jar and filling up the rest of the jar with extracted honey. Remember to freeze the comb honey first.

Wax cappings are a valuable by-product of extracting. After cappings have dripped dry, wash them in water to remove all honey. Melt the cappings, strain the wax through cheesecloth and pour it into bread pans or a similar mold.