

## A Tip Sheet... An Overview of Dos and Don'ts

Of course see [Honey Show Prep](#) for much more detail.

The most important thing an exhibitor should do first is read the rules carefully. Great exhibits have been disqualified due to the exhibitor not following the rules. It is paramount to re-check the rules or if in doubt contact the Show Superintendent.

Do use escape boards or shaking/ brushing or use a blower for getting bees off combs.

Don't use smoke to clear bees from honey supers - it puts little tiny black specks in the honey and on the surface of comb honey. In extracted honey they end up on the underside of lids. Don't use Bee Go in a fume board -- if left a bit too long the honey may stink.

For the extracted honey entry, some people use comb honey, crushed carefully so not to introduce air, and strained through nylon cloth. This precludes tiny bubbles being created in an extractor....They believe entries for extracted class should never be extracted! If using an extractor warm the combs slightly and spin on a low speed.

Honey should be heated to 140 F for 30 min. and then cooled. to melt crystals and give it a pristine get up and go look.

When using a nylon strainer hang it near to the base of the bucket. Fill with honey then slowly pull the strainer up towards the top. If it is too high the honey will fall like rain and add plenty of air.

Do fill honey jars correctly. (See below) Honey must cover the bead and be about 3/8 to 1/2 inch below top with no gap visible between lid and honey. Make sure the THREADS of the jar are honey free -- it seeps down and gets the jar sticky.



If you fill the jars with warm honey go just above the leveling mark, the reason being that when the honey cools it will shrink.

If the honey is too thin with too much moisture, remove the lid and place in a dry warm room or near a dehumidifier which will remove some excess moisture.

Don't put honey in a carry-on if you fly. The Security people will have your nice honey after they confiscate it. If you fly, give honey entries to a friend who is driving with your handling instructions and packing.

Don't forget to protect your products in a hot vehicle. If you aren't careful extracted honey will expand and leak. Creamed honey will go soft. Candles will warp, and don't even get us started on comb honey. Wrap candles in silk or fine tissue paper to prevent scratches. When you take candles out of ice chest the "bloom" disappears on warming up, or you may rub the candle with silk or your palm of your hand; rub left to right and not in circles. Keep comb honey containers in plastic bags so condensation that appears as they warm up will be on the bag, not on the comb package.

Do replace caps. Just before entry time, remove caps the entries traveled with with 3 perfect caps brought tied individually in a nylon knee high. Or use a large piece of cling film underneath the lids and folded over the tops to help stop them scratching.

Do polish the jar at entry table with the nylon to remove finger prints. A little methylated spirits is ideal for cleaning glass. The smell will disappear quickly.

Chunk Honey should have 50% comb, and make sure the comb is facing the correct way up. The comb should be the same honey as in the jar.

Do replace cut comb in a new container just before entry, paying attention to drops of honey that might have leaked.

Do clean the comb honey in frames. The frame can be scraped carefully with a knife or a blade. Remember the frame is a plate with the honey being the food, so no dirty plates.

Do have the right consistency for Creamed Honey. A good test for ideal texture would be to take the lid off the jar and place the honey on its side. The honey should show a slight bulge like that on a wheel of a car. And not run out. Or stay flat.

Do take care when heating wax. Too much heating of the wax removes the aroma and darkens the wax. Try not to go to much past the melting point which is 143 degrees F.

If using silicone moulds place these in the freezer for 30 minutes to get them ice cold. This will give your candle a perfect surface crisp and clean.

Wicks on candles should be centered. For poured and molded candles, wicks also should be trimmed properly and uniformly ( $\frac{1}{2}$  in) with a slight tilt for ease of lighting . Try to use a braided wick that has been dipped first in wax. This gives a better and more even burn.

Do finish your candle bottoms. The biggest goof in poured candles is the bottom -- holes not filled, not flat, just not "finished." Put a little washing up liquid around the side of the candle near the base, but not underneath the base. Place the base on a tilted hot saucepan. This will level the base of the candle. The melted wax will not stick to the side of the candle that has the washing up liquid on it.

Do make dipped candles in draft free area. If not the candles will bend when cooling and there will be a difference in thickness due to the cold part of the candle cooling the melted wax more quickly when being dipped. On the bottom, dipped candles should have a last drip.

Do crop photos to maximize the detail of the subject. Consider unusual subjects or angles.

Do make sure your cookies, bars, brownies, rolls, muffins and candy are all uniform and of the same weight.

Do make sure there are no date marks or lettering stamped on the mead bottles.

Do make sure that mead bottles are colorless with no tints.

Do make sure that corks are embedded 1/8th inch below the top.

Thank you to Ann Harman, Mike Palmer and Michael Young MBE for contributing to the Tips Sheet.