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Agriculture**

**Agricultural
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Service**

**Fruit and
Vegetable
Division**

**Processed
Products
Branch**

United States Standards for Grades of Comb Honey

Effective date May 24, 1967

This is the second issue, as amended, of the United States Standards for Grades of Comb Honey. This issue contains all of the requirements of the first issue, effective August 1933, and the amendments published in the **FEDERAL REGISTER** of May 24, 1967 (32 FR 7565) to become effective May 24, 1967.

Voluntary U.S. grade standards are issued under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, which provides for the development of official U.S. grades to designate different levels of quality. These grade standards are available for use by producers, suppliers, buyers, and consumers. As in the case of other standards for grades of processed fruits and vegetables, these standards are designed to facilitate orderly marketing by providing a convenient basis for buying and selling, for establishing quality control programs, and for determining loan values.

The standards also serve as a basis for the inspection and grading of commodities by the Federal inspection service, the only activity authorized to approve the designation of U.S. grades as referenced in the standards, as provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. This service, available as on-line (in-plant) or lot inspection and grading of all processed fruit and vegetable products, is offered to interested parties, upon application, on a fee-for-service basis. The verification of some specific recommendations, requirements, or tolerances contained in the standards can be accomplished only by the use of on-line inspection procedures. In all instances, a grade can be assigned based on final product factors or characteristics.

In addition to the U.S. grade standards, grading manuals or instructions for inspection of several processed fruits and vegetables are available upon request for a nominal fee. These manuals or instructions contain detailed interpretations of the grade standards and provide step-by-step procedures for grading the product.

Grade standards are issues by the Department after careful consideration of all data and views submitted, and the Department welcomes suggestions which might aid in improving the standards in future revisions. Comments may be submitted to, and copies of standards and grading manuals obtained from:

Chief, Processed Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 96456, Rm. 0709, So. Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20090-6456

United States Standards for Grades of Comb Honey

Section	Page No.
§52.2861	Product description. 2
§52.2862	U.S. Fancy comb-section honey. 2
§52.2863	U.S. No. 1 comb-section honey. 3
§52.2864	U.S. No. 1 Mixed Color comb-section honey. 5
§52.2865	U.S. No. 2 comb-section honey. 5
§52.2866	Unclassified comb-section honey. 8
§52.2867	U.S. Fancy shallow-frame comb honey. 8
§52.2868	U.S. No. 1 shallow-frame comb honey. 10
§52.2869	Unclassified shallow-frame comb honey. 11
§52.2870	U.S. Fancy wrapped cut-comb honey. 11
§52.2871	U.S. No. 1 wrapped cut-comb honey. 12
§52.2872	Unclassified wrapped cut-comb honey. 13
§52.2873	U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin. 13
§52.2874	U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin. 14
§52.2875	Unclassified chunk or bulk comb-honey-packed in tin. 16
§52.2876	U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass. 16
§52.2877	U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass. 16
§52.2878	Unclassified chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass. 17
§52.2879	Application of tolerances. 17
§52.2880	Tolerances for comb-section honey. 17
§52.2881	Tolerances for shallow-frame comb honey. 17
§52.2882	Tolerances for wrapped cut-comb honey. 19
§52.2883	Tolerances for chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin. 19
§52.2884	Tolerances for chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass. 19
§52.2885	Official USA colors. 19
§52.2886	Color classification of comb honey. 20
§52.2887	Uniformity of color. 20
§52.2888	Definitions of terms. 21
Authority:	Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, Secs. 203, 205, 60 Stat. 1087, as amended, 1090, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1622, 1624).

Note: Compliance with the provisions of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or with applicable State laws and regulations.

§52.2861 Product description.

The grades in this subpart, as hereinafter outlined, are for the following variations of comb honey:

Comb-section honey.
Shallow-frame honey.
Wrapped cut-comb honey.
Chunk or bulk comb honey.

§52.2862 U.S. Fancy comb-section honey.

U.S. Fancy honey shall consist of comb-section honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a)** The comb shall-
 - (1)** Have no uncapped cells except in the row attached to the wood section;
 - (2)** Be attached to 75 percent of the adjacent area of the wood section if the outside row of cells is empty, or attached to 50 percent if the outside row is filled with honey;
 - (3)** Not project beyond the edge of the wood section;
 - (4)** Not have dry holes;
 - (5)** Have not more than a total of 2-1/2 linear inches of through holes;
 - (6)** Be free from cells of pollen.
- (b)** The cappings shall-
 - (1)** Be dry and free from weeping and from damage caused by bruising or other means.
 - (2)** Present a uniformly even appearance except in the row attached to the wood section.
- (c)** The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for this grade in the official color chart.
- (d)** The honey shall-

- (1) Be uniform in color throughout the comb.
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The wood section shall-
- (1) Be as free from excessive propolis and/or pronounced stains as illustration A in the official color chart.
 - (2) Be smooth and new in appearance, of white to light buff basswood, and shall not contain knots and/or streaks in excess of the amount shown in illustration B in the color chart.
- (f) The minimum net weight shall be 12 ounces, unless otherwise specified.

§52.2863 U.S. No. 1 comb-section honey.

U.S. No. 1 honey shall consist of comb-section honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
- (1) Have no uncapped cells except-
 - (i) In the row attached to the wood section, and/or
 - (ii) In the row adjoining the outside row, in the corners, and along the lower edge, provided the number does not exceed 15 in a comb section.
 - (2) Be attached to 50 percent of the adjacent area of the wood section;
 - (3) Not project beyond the edge of the wood section;
 - (4) Have no dry holes;
 - (5) Have not more than a total of 4 linear inches of through holes;
 - (6) Be free from cells of pollen.
- (b) The cappings shall-

- (1) Be dry and free from weeping and from damage caused by bruising or other means;
 - (2) Present a uniformly even appearance except in the row attached to the wood section and except for slight irregularities affecting not to exceed one-half of the comb surface.
- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for this grade in the official color chart.
- (d) The honey shall-
- (1) Be fairly uniform in color throughout the comb;
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The wood section shall-
- (1) Be as free from excessive propolis and/or pronounced stains as illustration A in the official color chart;
 - (2) Be smooth and new in appearance, of white to light buff basswood, and shall not contain knots and/or streaks in excess of the amount shown in illustration B in the color chart.
- (f) The minimum net weight shall be 11 ounces, unless otherwise specified.

§52.2864 U.S. No. 1 Mixed Color comb-section honey.

When sections of U.S. No. 1 comb-section honey of different colors are packed in the same container, they shall be designated as U.S. No. 1 Mixed Color comb-section honey.

§52.2865 U.S. No. 2 comb-section honey.

U.S. No. 2 honey shall consist of comb-section honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Have no uncapped cells except-
 - (i) In the row attached to the wood section, and/or

- (f) The minimum net weight shall be 10 ounces, unless otherwise specified.

§52.2866 Unclassified comb-section honey.

Unclassified comb-section honey shall consist of comb-section honey that does not conform to the requirements for any of the foregoing grades.

§52.2867 U.S. Fancy shallow-frame comb honey.

U.S. Fancy honey shall consist of shallow-frame comb honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be produced in shallow frame spaced 1-3/8 inches from center to center, which will give a comb thickness of not less than 1 inch, unless otherwise specified;
 - (2) Be drawn out on foundation which is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compares favorably in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (3) Be well built out;
 - (4) Never have contained brood;
 - (5) Have no dry holes;
 - (6) Have no uncapped cells, except as follows-
 - (i) Empty cells in the row attached to the frame, and/or
 - (ii) 150 uncapped cells filled with well-ripened honey in the adjoining row;
 - (7) Be free from cells of pollen.
- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Not be broken or damaged by other means;
 - (2) Present a uniformly even appearance.

- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. Fancy comb-section honey in the official color chart.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Uniform in color throughout the combs of the lot, unless otherwise specified;
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.

§52.2868 U.S. No. 1 shallow-frame comb honey.

U.S. No. 1 honey shall consist of shallow-frame comb honey that meets the following requirements.

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be produced in shallow frame spaced 1-3/8 inches from center to center, which will give a comb thickness of not less than 1 inch, unless otherwise specified;
 - (2) Be drawn out on foundation which is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compares favorably in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (3) Never have contained brood;
 - (4) Have no uncapped cells, except as follows-
 - (i) Empty cells in the row attached to the frame and in the adjoining row, and/or
 - (ii) Additional uncapped filled cells, provided they are confined to groups and in the aggregate do not cover over 10 percent of the comb surface in any frame;
 - (5) Be free from damage caused by cells of pollen.
- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Be free from serious damage caused by being broken or by other means;

- (2) Present a uniformly even appearance except for slight irregularities affecting not to exceed one-half of the comb surface.
- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. No. 1 comb-section honey in the official color chart.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Be fairly uniform in color throughout the comb;
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.

§52.2869 Unclassified shallow-frame comb honey.

Unclassified shallow-frame comb honey shall consist of shallow-frame comb honey that does not conform to the requirements for either of the foregoing grades.

§52.2870 U.S. Fancy wrapped cut-comb honey.

U.S. Fancy honey shall consist of wrapped cut-comb honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be drawn out on foundation that is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compared favorable in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (2) Have no uncapped cells except on the cut edges;
 - (3) Never have contained brood;
 - (4) Have no dry holes;
 - (5) Be free from cells of pollen.
- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Be free from weeping and from damage caused by bruising or other means;
 - (2) Present a uniformly even appearance.

- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. Fancy comb-section honey in the official color chart.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Be uniform in color throughout the comb;
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The wrapper shall be transparent, clean, and sealed in such a manner as to prevent leakage.
- (f) The minimum new weight shall be 12 ounces, unless otherwise specified.

§52.2871 U.S. No. 1 wrapped cut-comb honey.

U.S. No. 1 honey shall consist of wrapped cut-comb honey that meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be drawn out on foundation that is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compares favorably in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (2) Have no uncapped cells; except as follows-
 - (i) On the cut edges, and/or
 - (ii) In the row adjoining the cut edge, provided the number does not exceed 15 in a cut comb;
 - (3) Never have contained brood;
 - (4) Have no dry holes;
 - (5) Be free from cells of pollen.
- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Be free from weeping and from damage cause by bruising or other means;

- (2) Present a uniformly even appearance except for slight irregularities affecting not to exceed one-half of the comb surface.
- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. Fancy comb-section honey in the official color chart.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Be fairly uniform in color throughout the comb;
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The wrapper shall be transparent, clean, and sealed in such a manner as to prevent leakage.
- (f) The minimum net weight shall be 11 ounces, unless otherwise specified.

§52.2872 Unclassified wrapped cut-comb honey.

Unclassified wrapped cut-comb honey shall consist of cut-comb honey which does not conform to the requirements for either of the foregoing grades.

§52.2873 U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin.

U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey packed in tin shall consist of not less than 50 percent by volume of chunk or bulk comb honey, unless otherwise specified, which meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be drawn out on foundation that is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compares favorably in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (2) Have not more than one uncapped cell per square inch of comb surface;
 - (3) Never have contained brood;
 - (4) Have no dry holes;
 - (5) Be free from cells of pollen.

- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Be free from damage caused by bruising or other means;
 - (2) Present a uniformly even appearance.
- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. Fancy comb-section honey in the official color chart, except that any amount of watery cappings shall be permitted.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Be uniform in color throughout the comb and the color of the honey in the comb shall not be darker color classification of the extracted honey used to make up the total weight.
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The total weight shall be made up with U.S. Fancy extracted honey.
- (f) The color of the honey within the container shall be designated according to the color of the extracted honey used to make up the total weight.

§52.2874 U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin.

U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey packed in tin shall consist of not less than 50 percent by volume of chunk or bulk comb honey, unless otherwise specified, which meets the following requirements:

- (a) The comb shall-
 - (1) Be drawn out on foundation that is light in color and is thin enough to produce a comb that compares favorably in texture with the comb in comb-section honey;
 - (2) Have not more than one uncapped cell per square inch of comb surface;
 - (3) Never have contained brood;
 - (4) Have no dry holes;
 - (5) Be free from cells of pollen.

- (b) The cappings shall-
 - (1) Be free from damage caused by bruising or other means;
 - (2) Present a uniformly even appearance except for slight irregularities affecting not to exceed one-half of the comb surface.
- (c) The color of the comb and cappings shall conform to the requirements as illustrated for U.S. No. 1 comb-section honey in the official color chart, except that any amount of watery cappings shall be permitted.
- (d) The honey shall-
 - (1) Be fairly uniform in color throughout the comb and the color of the honey in the comb shall not be darker than the next darker color classification of the extracted honey used to make up the total weight.
 - (2) Be free from damage caused by granulation, honeydew, poorly ripened or sour honey, objectionable flavor or odor, or other means.
- (e) The total weight shall be made up with U.S. Fancy extracted honey.
- (f) The color of the honey within the container shall be designated according to the color of the extracted honey used to make up the total weight.

§52.2875 Unclassified chunk or bulk comb-honey-packed in tin.

Unclassified chunk or bulk comb honey packed in tin shall consist of chunk or bulk comb honey that does not conform to the requirements of any of the foregoing grades.

§52.2876 U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass.

U.S. Fancy chunk or bulk comb honey packed in glass shall consist of chunk or bulk comb honey that conforms to the requirements for this grade when packed in tin, except that no given volume of chunk or bulk comb honey is required.

§52.2877 U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass.

U.S. No. 1 chunk or bulk comb honey packed in glass shall consist of chunk or bulk comb honey that conforms to the requirements for this grade when packed in tin, except that no given volume of chunk or bulk comb honey is required.

§52.2878 Unclassified chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass.

Unclassified chunk or bulk comb honey packed in glass shall consist of chunk or bulk comb honey that does not conform to the requirements of any of the foregoing grades.

§52.2879 Application of tolerances.

The tolerances specified for the various grades are placed on a container basis. However, any lot of honey shall be considered as meeting the requirements of a specified grade if no sample from the containers in any lot is found to exceed the tolerances specified by more than double the amount allowed, provided the entire lot shall average within the tolerance specified.

§52.2880 Tolerances for comb-section honey.

(a) U.S. Fancy, U.S. No. 1, and U.S. No. 1 Mixed Color.

- (1)** In order to allow for variations, other than in weight, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the comb sections in any container may be below the requirements for the grade, but not to exceed two-fifths of this tolerance, or 2 percent of the comb sections in any container, shall be allowed for defects causing serious damage.
- (2)** In addition to the foregoing tolerance, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the comb sections in any container may fail to meet the weight requirements.

(b) U.S. No. 2.

- (1)** In order to allow for variations, other than in weight, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the comb sections in any container may be below the requirements for the grade.
- (2)** In addition to the foregoing tolerance, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the comb sections in any container may fail to meet the weight requirements.

§52.2881 Tolerances for shallow-frame comb honey.

(a) U.S. Fancy and U.S. No. 1.

- (1) In order to allow for variations, other than in weight, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the frames of honey in any container may be below the requirements for the grade, but not to exceed two-fifths of this number, or 2 percent of the frames in any container, shall be allowed for defects causing serious damage.
- (2) In addition to the foregoing tolerance, a variation of not more than 5 percent below the net weight marked on the cases shall be permitted.

§52.2882 Tolerances for wrapped cut-comb honey.

(a) U.S. Fancy and U.S. No. 1.

- (1) In order to allow for variations, other than in weight, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the wrapped cut combs in any container may be below the requirements for the grade, but not to exceed two-fifths of this tolerance, or 2 percent of the wrapped cut combs in any container, shall be allowed for defects causing serious damage.
- (2) In addition to the foregoing tolerance, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the wrapped cut combs in any container may fail to meet the weight requirements.

§52.2883 Tolerances for chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in tin.

- (a) U.S. Fancy and U.S. No.1.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the containers in any lot may have honey below the requirements for the grade.

§52.2884 Tolerances for chunk or bulk comb honey-packed in glass.

- (a) U.S. Fancy and U.S. No. 1.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 5 percent, by count, of the containers in any lot may have honey below the requirements for the grade.

§52.2885 Official USA colors.

- (a) Official color chart.** The official color chart mentioned throughout this subpart is out of print and no longer available.

- (b) **USDA glass color standards.** These color standards replace the **official color chart** which is out of print. Information regarding the USDA glass color standards, and their availability, may be obtained from:

Chief, Processed Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 96456, Rm. 0709, So. Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20090-6456

§52.2886 Color classification of comb honey.

- (a) Comb-section honey, shallow-frame comb honey, and wrapped cut-comb honey shall be classified as white, light amber, amber, or dark amber.
- (b) The foregoing color classification shall be determined in accordance with the color standards as outlined in the applicable U.S. Standards for Grades of Extracted Honey, but the color shall be designated as follows:
- (1) Honey classed as water white, extra white, and white for extracted honey shall be designated white comb honey;
 - (2) Honey classed as extra light amber and light amber shall be designated light amber comb honey;
 - (3) Honey classed as amber shall be designated dark amber comb honey.
 - (4) Honey that is darker than amber shall be designated dark amber comb honey.
- (c) In classifying the color of comb honey, a sample of liquid honey shall be drained from a broken comb and the determination made according to the color standards for extracted honey as outlined in the applicable U.S. Standards for Grades of Extracted Honey.
- (d) It is permissible to state the color of the honey contained in the comb in conformity with the colors established for the classification of the color of extracted honey.

§52.2887 Uniformity of color.

- (a) Uniform in color** means that no pronounced variation in color is apparent in the honey on looking through a comb toward the light.
- (b) Fairly uniform in color** means that honey of a slightly different color from that in the body of the comb section is permitted in the row next to the section and in 10 additional cells, provided these additional cells are well distributed and are in the row adjoining the outside row. In no event shall the contrast of color be greater than that between any color classification and the darker color classification.

§52.2888 Definitions of terms.

- (a) Damage** means any injury or defect that materially affects the appearance, edibility, or shipping quality of the honey, such as:

 - (1)** The presence of any cells, of pollen in more than one-third of the combs in any lot of U.S. No. 1 shallow-frame comb honey. One-third of the combs may have not more than 50 cells of pollen in a comb, provided they are not widely scattered but are on the outside edges of the comb.
 - (2)** The presence in comb-section honey, shallow-frame comb honey, wrapped cut-comb honey, or chunk or bulk comb honey packed in tin or glass, of more than 10 percent by volume of granulated honey in the uncapped cells, or of more than very small or scattered granules in the capped cells.
 - (3)** The presence of any spots of feces (bee excrement) on the comb.
- (b) Serious damage** means any injury or defect that seriously affects the edibility or shipping quality of the honey. Any spots of feces on the surface of the comb or, in sections, attachment of comb to less than 45 percent of the adjacent area shall be considered serious damage.
- (c) Uncapped cells** or cells, either empty or filled with honey, which are not sealed or capped over by the bees.
- (d) Adjacent area of the section** means the total length of the four inner sides of the section, multiplied by the thickness of the comb; as, for instance, in the case of a section 4-1/4 inches square, 4+4+4+4 equals 16, which, multiplied by the actual thickness of the comb, which might be 1-1/4 inches, gives an adjacent area of 20 square inches.

- (e) **Project beyond the edge of the section** refers to the projection of comb beyond the widest part of the section, generally because no separators were used, and does not refer to the occasional slight projection of wax beyond the narrow or beeway part of the section. Projection at this point to such an extent that honey leaks down over the face of the comb is not permitted.
- (f) **Dry holes** are holes in the honey-comb larger than a cell, and not next to the wood; they may extend partly or entirely through the comb.
- (g) **Through holes** are holes or passages through the comb from one side of the comb to the other, between the edge of the comb and the section.
- (h) **Weeping** is the exudation or seepage of honey through the cappings, forming small drops which finally run down the face of the comb. It is usually caused by absorption of moisture from the atmosphere by the honey.
- (i) **Bruising** is any injury by accident or pressure, such as an indentation of the surface of the comb by pressure of fingers. Bruising is considered to be damage if it is sufficient to cause leaking.
- (j) **Uniformly even appearance** means that the surface of the combs shall be free from irregularities other than those incident to the work of the bees in completing a comb of uniform construction.
- (k) **Slight irregularities** means irregularities of not more than one-eighth inch above or below the general surface of the comb, but not projecting beyond the edge of the section. The slight ridging of the comb surface sometimes incidental to use of fence separators is not to be considered an irregularity.
- (l) **Freedom from excessive propolis and/or pronounced stains** means that the top of the wood section shall bear no greater stain from propolis than that ordinarily found on a paraffined section, and that the other three sides and the edges and inner faces and angles of the wood sections shall be reasonably free from propolis. Permissible stain is shown in the color chart.¹
- (m) **New in appearance** means not discolored by age or exposure. Paraffined sections usually appear new, even though they may be left over from a previous season.

¹See §52.2885.

- (n) **Well built out**, as used in reference to shallow-frame comb honey, means that the combs are fairly uniform in thickness throughout each comb and throughout the lot.

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G.R. Grange,
Deputy Administrator,
Marketing Services.

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