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Chemists from Granada do research to guarantee honey quality and its geographical origin

06.11.2006

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At the beggining of November 2003, it was known that the European Union had banned the importation of Chinese honey. Health authorities decided so since it had a high pollutant substances content.

Honeybee plays a central role in the honey-making process. Harmful antibiotics for the human being are used to prevent diseases which affect bees from damaging honey. In addition, pesticides are the other great enemy of health and trade, as they can be present in this typical local produce.

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To avoid extreme measures like that of the Chinese honey, studies are necessary to extend the traditional ones, like pollen analysis, which is affected by different factors. Among them, the ability of the expert himself. "To make this process more scientific it is necessary to carry out chemical analysis applying sensitive and reliable analytical techniques", explains Alberto Fernández Gutiérrez, Professor of the University of Granada (Universidad de Granada [http://www.ugr.es]) and director of the research group "Analytical, environmental, biochemical and food control".

In this sense, capillary electrophoresis is an analytical technique with a great potential to use it in food and agriculture. At the present day, scientific teams are using it in our country and all over the world. This UGR

[http://www.ugr.es] group has proved the potential of this process as a routine analysis method in different products like beer, oil or honey, to implement it in industry laboratories to control production quality and the final result.

Honey elements

The analytical technique aims to separate the different chemical compounds of complex samples. By coupling it to different detection systems we can identify and quantify sample compounds and obtain a graphic representation called electropherogram. It is a kind of identity card or identifying print where everything and every part of the whole is collected.

There are many substances present in honey and analytical chemistry is an essential tool to detect and quantify them. At the moment, studies on organic acid content are being carried out to characterize the different sorts of honey according to their origin.

According to Professor Fernández Gutiérrez, "through honey electropherograms, we aim to distinguish one kind of honey from another, which are more beneficial to health, which flower they belong to and other questions like the geographical origin according to OD organisms".

This research group is working in collaboration with the recent Regulatory Council of Origin Denomination Honey from Granada, since last year´s Honey Fair of Lanjarón. The County Council of Granada supports the research; they also have funds of other projects of the group.

Nowadays, teamwork are directed towards obtaining a chemical characterization

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chestnut tree, avocado pear tree, rosemary, thyme, orange tree, Sierra´s honey and multifloral honey", pints out Antonio Segura Carretero, winner of the Young Researchers´ Prize of the Andalusian Association of Analytical Chemists, in 2002.

Antonio Marin Ruiz | Quelle: alphagalileo
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