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**‘Honest Honey’ Launched to Protect
U.S. Honey Consumers and Customers**

Duty circumvention a threat to U.S. honey industry, honey supply quality

WASHINGTON, May 6, 2010 – Four North American honey marketing companies and importers – Golden Heritage Foods, LLC, Burleson’s Inc., Odem International, and Dutch Gold Honey – today launched the Honest Honey Initiative and pledged to help protect the quality and reputation of the U.S. honey supply, as well as the sustainability of U.S. beekeepers and honey businesses. The initiative seeks to call attention to illegal sales of honey in circumvention of U.S. trade laws, a practice that the organizers estimate cost the United States up to \$200 million in uncollected duties in 2008 and 2009 combined and threatens a vital segment of U.S. agriculture.

The group unveiled a website, HonestHoney.com, an educational resource providing information about where honey comes from and ways consumers, honey companies, food manufacturers and retailers can take action to eliminate illegally imported honey.

“When honey is imported illegally, no-one can be confident of its true source and quality. Some products are not 100% honey and have other quality issues,” said Jill Clark of Dutch Gold Honey, Lancaster, Penn. “We’re asking people who buy and love honey to find out more about how the honey they enjoy is sourced. By raising awareness of unfair trade practices and taking the Honest Honey pledge, we hope to protect consumers and manufacturers who use honey, and to preserve the fair honey trade.”

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According to the Honest Honey organizers, most imported and domestic honey is from high-quality, legal sources. The U.S. government has tried to crack down on honey from China that skirts U.S. trade duties, but the problem continues.

“We estimate that millions of pounds of Chinese honey continue to enter the U.S. from countries that do not have commercial honey businesses,” said Clark. “For example, countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines and Mongolia raise few bees and have no history of producing honey in commercial quantities, yet have recently exported large amounts of honey to the United States.

“Honey has earned a special place in people’s hearts and minds as a wholesome, natural food. We want to protect that reputation and quality,” said Clark.

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The Honest Honey Initiative is an effort by a number of honey companies and importers to call attention to the problem of illegally sourced honey; to encourage action to protect consumers and customers from these practices; and to highlight and support legal, transparent and ethical sourcing. The initiative seeks to help maintain the reputation of honey as a high-quality, highly valued food and further sustain the U.S. honey sector. Learn more at www.HonestHoney.com.