Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

OIA17-0321

28 JUN 2017

John Hill
c/- FYI Website

Dear John Hill

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 30 May 2017 relating to the following:

1) Was there a discussion or decision or direction by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to exclude any chemical markers used to identify mānuka honey by the honey industry, from the MPI mānuka honey science program prior to the science being undertaken?

2) Was there a discussion or decision or direction by MPI to exclude any chemical markers used to identify mānuka honey by the honey industry, from the MPI mānuka honey science program during the science being undertaken?

Please provide all emails, written and other forms of correspondence, meeting notes and personal file notes on this subject.

In answer to your first question, there was no direction by MPI to exclude any chemical markers identified by industry prior to the science programme commencing, rather MPI considered it was important to initially cast the net wide on the number of attributes evaluated as part of the mānuka honey science programme. The 14 chemical markers investigated under the science programme are listed in the MPI Science Summary document for the mānuka honey science programme that can be found at the following URL. http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/17314

In answer to your second question, MPI identified a set of criteria during the science programme to assess the usefulness or suitability of each marker for identifying mānuka honey. The criteria are detailed in the MPI Science Summary document and are further summarised below.

MPI will still consider in good faith any submissions requesting inclusion of chemical markers as part of the definition.

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MPI established the following criteria which could be assessed to determine the usefulness or suitability of each candidate marker:
- presence in mānuka plants and in other plants;
- whether or not levels in plants and associated honey can be used for separation;
- does mānuka nectar have significantly greater or lower levels of a marker than the nectar from other plant species?
- does mānuka honey have significantly greater or lower levels of a marker between different honey types?
- stability of the markers over time and temperature.

After the first season of samples (2014/15) were tested, detailed analysis of the data was used to inform the selection of markers that would be further investigated.

MPI has released publicly reasons for inclusion or exclusion of specific markers through the science summary document, discussion document and release of raw data as well as presentations and discussions at workshops and industry meetings.

Therefore, this request is refused pursuant to section 18(d) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) on the basis that the information requested is publicly available.

Yours sincerely

Allan Kinsella
Director Systems Audit, Assurance & Monitoring