

# Malt Extract vs. Honey

By Paul Gibbs

Many fanciers have and do use honey as a “pick-me-up” for their birds after a tough hit out, with fanciers having used honey for many years all around the world. Honey as we know is a totally natural product that many of us enjoy ourselves, some on toast or as a sweetener in place of refined sugar in tea or coffee.

Although honey contains several minerals they are in very minor amounts. Honey’s main nutritional content is basically carbohydrate in the form of sugars, which in excess can be detrimental to pigeons, while actually containing very little in terms of vitamins.

Malt Extract as its name implies is derived from roasted malted barley and is also a totally natural product, barley being a grain that many fanciers feed to their birds.

For those not familiar with this product, it has the same consistency, as honey but can tend to be a bit darker in colour. It has a rich sweet flavour, but not as sweet as honey. As far as nutritional values go I believe it to be a better alternative to honey as a “pick-me-up” as it contains many more benefits as far as nutrition goes i.e. Malt Extract (according to its manufactures) contains less carbohydrate (sugars) than honey, but is loaded with the beneficial B Group of vitamins required for recovery after a hard race or training toss. The information supplied on the label list the following for a 35gr serve –

Vit B1 .14 mg

Vit B2 .07 mg

Vit B3 2.17 mg

Vit B6 0.595mg

Vit B12 2.45 mg. Along with 14mg of Sodium, 112 mg of Potassium and 1.75g of Protein.

The most really available brand is “Saunders Malt Extract” and can be purchased at most super markets. If you wish to try it as a recovery or energy boost I would recommend 1 teaspoon to 500ml of water. First dilute the Malt Extract in a little warm water (not hot, as hot water can destroy the nutrients) then make this small amount of warm solution up 500ml of room temperature water. Depending on the days temperature don’t allow the water to ferment, make a fresh amount should you feel the need after a few hours, or just replace with fresh water once the birds have had a good drink.

**(Don’t be frightened to take a spoonful or two yourselves each day; it definitely will make you feel better).**

As 2017 has ended and a new year has began, the following quote by Hal Borland sounds appropriate:

***“Years end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instil in us”.***