

Some Honey Heating Options—2015 update

SBH Solutions

At SBH Solutions we are always being asked by honey people for heating solutions. The melting point of crystalized honey is usually between 40 to 50 C. But “honeys ain’t honeys” and some like Manuka are difficult to shift from a solid state. Therefore a suitable heating solution will depend on the honey, the volume, the ambient temperature, time required and your budget.

205 litre drums

For 205 litre drums, our most satisfied customers use the HDD 1000w full length insulated jacket. Not only does a full jacket minimise heat loss, it also evenly heats all the way around the drum, from top to bottom. Temperature control is achieved with a capillary thermostat, so leaving the heater on overnight will gently melt the honey without any discolouration or loss of quality.



In 2014 we introduced the HHND 750w insulated heater jacket which is one third of the height of the drum. This has proved popular with small growers and processors as a cost effective solution. Pure Origins for instance use it to heat 3 x 20 litre pails bundled together, as well as 205 litre drums. And W.C. McNamara use it on a horizontally mounted 205 litre drum covered with a horse blanket.

Some customers on a budget use silicone band heaters which can be 12—16% the cost of an HDD. Our 750W band with a 152mm width applies a high heat density which quickly dissipates and should not damage or discolour the contents. In colder ambient temperatures, a more concentrated 102mm wide 1200w band may be needed but care is required to avoid damage to the honey.

1000 litre IBCs

A full IBC with 1400kg honey can take up to 5 days to achieve a melt. For this application, we recommend the 2000W IBC1 Hi-Heat jacket with insulated skirts that hang in the pallet space to reduce air movement under the base. The IBC1HH is used by many producers such as Buzz Honey, Island Beehive, Flinders Apiaries and Bendigo Gold. Beerenberg, some years ago replaced a heated shipping container with our jackets saving significant energy and handling costs.

Another option is the IBC2 with upper and lower 1100W circuits. This jacket has the advantage of allowing different temperature settings, or even switching off the upper circuit when the product level in the container has dropped below halfway.

When heating IBCs, best results are achieved by placing the IBC on a plywood sheet or similar to minimise heat loss down into a concrete floor. The overnight ambient is also an important factor—one customer with freezing overnight temperatures had to build himself a makeshift hot box around his IBC even with his IBC2 in place.

The most difficult area to heat in an IBC is the “cone” of product at the bottom of the container. So this year we are introducing under floor heating trays—a pair of 350W heaters for use with the IBC1HH. This additional heat will reduce the melt time of product in the “cone”.

Custom Jackets

We can custom make heater jackets to suit different drums, IBCs or tanks. For example, Capilano ordered a custom jacket for a steel tank feeding their sachet filling line; the honey initially heated in their oven needed to be kept warm to completely empty the tank over several days.



Rental

For HDD and IBC jackets we offer trial before you buy. We also have some rental jackets for short-term heating requirements (such as candied honey) Ask us for details.

Quick Summary

- Insulated heater jackets provide the most energy efficient solution for drums or IBCs.
- Silicone heater bands can be used but carefully as the heat density can damage the honey.
- An IBC1HH heater jacket can generally melt an IBC of honey in 5 days.
- Drum or IBC ovens are effective for large volumes, can be expensive to purchase and run.

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