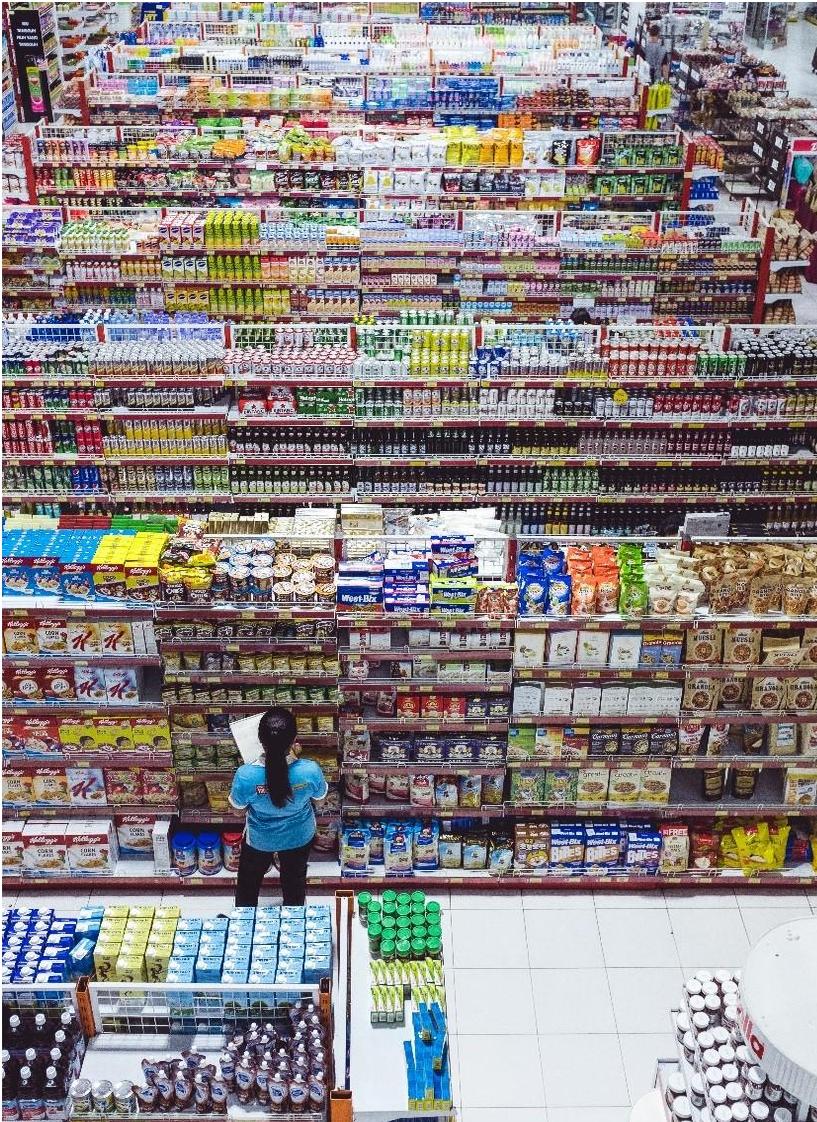


# Barcodes

By Stephen Gallagher NKBKA

Needed if you sell to supermarkets;  
here's how to get one.



If you're looking to sell honey to a shop, you'll be asked to provide barcodes for your produce more than likely. Getting one can be confusing and expensive, so we'll try create some clarity here and save you a few bucks.

A bit of background, barcodes are decades old, the general purpose is to track inventory using the convenience of a hand scanner connected to an centralised database (usually limited to the premises of the shop, but can spider to other locations if the company is large enough). Even in the smallest country shop, you will likely find a barcode reading system. They are ubiquitous.

There are many types of barcodes in use but we only need to concern ourselves with the International Article Number, also called the European Article number, or EAN. We'll stick with calling it EAN for this article.

There are two general methods for obtaining EAN barcodes.

1. Go online to the barcode authority known as **GS1**, they will issue you a range of EAN numbers that includes a unique manufacturer prefix, that only you will ever use.

While this is the official method of buying barcodes, it is neither the cheapest or the only option.

When purchasing from the GS1, you have to purchase a minimum number of barcodes (10), which will cost around €200 at the time of writing. There will also be a recurring annual cost, starting around €50 per year.

or

2. You can purchase a single barcode or a range of barcodes from an online reseller, roughly at about a tenner a barcode, cheaper if you buy more.

Up until a few years ago, GS1 would bulk sell millions of barcode ranges for very little money. These ranges were bought up by

resellers who purchased at fractions of the normal cost.

The downside is, when buying from a reseller, you do not get a unique manufacturer prefix, the prefix you receive is shared with all the other people who have bought from the reseller, as if you are all the same company.

Realistically there is no need to have a unique manufacturer prefix unless you are a very large operation with dozens of products at minimum.

You sell 5 types of honey? Then the reseller option is just fine. Sell loads more? Go with GS1.

There are many online companies reselling EAN barcodes, for example:

<https://www.nationwidebarcode.com/order-barcodes/>

This company make it very simple.

You enter the number of barcodes you require, your business name (or producer name, ie you), and your email address for delivery.

Pay the piper and you get automated delivery of your EAN barcodes in a number of image formats for you to print and attach to your jar or label.

Let's say you have 3 types of

honey for sale and you plan to stock in the local supermarket; clover, ivy and heather.

You sell these honeys in 2 sizes of jars; 8oz and 12oz. In order to have a unique barcode per product variant, you need 6 barcodes (3 types x 2 sizes = 6 barcodes).

A secondary step, perhaps prudent, perhaps unnecessary, is to then register those barcodes you have purchased with a registry like the barcode registry.

For about fifty dollars, you create a lifetime membership that locks in those barcodes with your details into a shared database.

You don't absolutely need to do this step however, as the barcodes that you obtain will be coded by the retailer with your details into their database. From a long-term perspective, with view to selling honey online maybe, having your barcodes registered this way could be seen as prudent. Up to you.

**So I've ordered my barcodes and received an email with different types of the same thing, what next?**

The barcode provider will have sent you a certificate of ownership for the barcodes, as well as each barcode in maybe 4 different image formats; .jpg, .tiff, .pdf and .png

Ignore the .jpg, .tiff and the .pdf versions, the easiest one to use here is the .png version.

You can take this barcode, (the .png one), and you can either print it out on its own label (like using sticker labels), to then affix to your appropriate jar of honey, or, incorporate it into your label design using an image\label editor. There's a bit more work adding the barcode to your pre-existing label, if you can do it, you should.

From an aesthetic perspective, it's best to incorporate the barcode into the overall design. From a functional perspective however, it does not matter a tap.

Not the easiest subject matter to get your head around, but it is understandable (with repeat viewings!). If you are wrecking your brains trying to work out how to make the barcodes work for you after following the guide, feel free to drop me an email

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