

Pesticide residues in food: latest data released

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Compliance with EU limits for pesticide residues remains high, according to EFSA, based on the results of over 125,000 food samples collected across Europe. EFSA's latest report, in line with previous years, confirms that the risk to human health from pesticide residues in food remains low.

EFSA's report analyses data from three control programmes: EU-coordinated sampling, providing a representative picture of the EU market; national controls carried out by authorities; and sampling in relation to increased border controls. The results are available through EFSA's data visualisation tool.

EU-coordinated sampling

Every year, EU Member States, together with Norway and Iceland, collect and report to EFSA thousands of samples from a group of widely consumed foods to provide a representative picture of the EU market. The same commodities are targeted every three years to track trends over time.

In 2024, national food safety authorities collected 9,842 samples of aubergines/eggplants, bananas, broccoli, cultivated fungi, grapefruits, melons, sweet peppers/bell peppers, table grapes, virgin olive oil, wheat grain, bovine fat and chicken eggs.

Of these, 98.8% samples were found to be compliant with EU legislation, a result consistent with the 98.7% recorded in 2021, when the same selection of products was analysed.

No measurable pesticide residues were found in 43.1% of samples, while 54.5% contained one or more residues within maximum residue levels (MRLs). MRLs were exceeded in 2.4% of samples, of which 1.2% were confirmed as non-compliant (meaning they exceeded the MRL after considering measurement uncertainty).

In the case of non-compliance, authorities in the Member States take actions proportionate to the associated consumer risk.

National control programmes

Most samples in the report were collected under the Multiannual National Control Programmes (MANCP). The MANCP complement the EU-coordinated sampling by taking into account factors like the significance of food products in trade or national diets, historically high levels of residues or non-compliance, pesticide usage patterns and the capabilities of national laboratories.

From 86,449 samples, 98.2% were found to be compliant with the EU's MRLs, a level consistent with previous years, including 98% in 2023 and 97.8% in 2022.

No measurable pesticide residues were found in nearly 60% of these samples (58.4%), and only 38.3% contained one or more residues within MRLs. The limits were exceeded in 3.3% of samples, of which 1.8% were found to be non-compliant.

As with the EU-coordinated sampling programme, in the case of non-compliance, authorities in the Member States take actions proportionate to the associated consumer risk.



EFSA's scientists also assessed whether consumers could be exposed to residue levels above safety thresholds. The assessment confirms a low risk to consumer health from the estimated exposure to pesticide residues in the foods tested in 2024.

Increased import controls

For the first time, EFSA's report clearly distinguishes findings from samples taken under specific EU Regulation for increased import controls. In previous years, these samples were included in the MANCP. These checks are done at EU borders and focus on certain hazards (e.g. pesticides or microbiological contamination), food products and countries, which are identified by Member States as requiring closer monitoring.

In these cases, the consignment is stopped at the border until laboratory results become available. The product is placed on the EU market if the laboratory results confirm that the product complies with EU rules.

From 39,433 imported food samples analysed under these checks, 38.3% had no quantifiable residues, and 56.2% had pesticide residues within the legally permitted levels. Around 5.5% exceeded EU limits, of which 3.6% were non-compliant. These non-compliant batches were stopped from entering the EU food market.