

Issue 3/2018

Latest European Union EFSA report on pesticide residues in food (European Food Safety Agency)

July 2018 saw the latest report by the European Food Safety Agency on pesticide residues in food, as monitored throughout the European Union, Iceland and Norway.

The July 2018 report provides an insight into the official control activities carried out by EU Member States, Iceland and Norway in 2016. Based on the analytical results provided by the reporting countries, a detailed data analysis was performed regarding pesticide occurrence in the most important food products consumed and the dietary risk related to the exposure of European consumers to pesticide

residues. Overall, 96.2% of the 84,657 samples analysed fell within the legal limits (81,482 samples). In total, 50.7% of the tested samples were free of quantifiable residues (residue levels below the limit of quantification (LOQ)), while 45.5% of the samples analysed contained quantified residues not exceeding the maximum residue levels (MRLs). The findings on pesticide residues are described for the

following categories: products of plant origin, products of animal origin, imported food, organic products and baby food. The acute and chronic dietary risk assessment indicated that the probability of European citizens being exposed to pesticide residue levels that could lead to negative health outcomes was low. Based on the analysis of the 2016 pesticide monitoring results, EFSA derived a number of recommendations to increase the efficiency of the European control systems to ensure a high level of consumer protection.

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However, non-governmental organisations such as PAN (Pesticide Action Network Europe) stressed that the share of fruit and vegetables with multiple pesticides residues was at about %. Despite a legal obligation in place since 2006, impacts of such pesticide “cocktails” have not been assessed.

PAN also highlighted the fact that the much-debated pesticide glyphosate has been detected in 3.5% of all samples. Glyphosate residues were mainly detected in wheat and rye, apples, tomatoes, wine grapes, honey and other apicultural products, strawberries, table grapes, sweet peppers, lettuces, asparagus, plums, leeks,

potatoes, kiwi fruits, carrots, cherries and pineapples.

Full EFSA report available at

<https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2018.5348>

Information on European Union food safety legislation, including access to full text of relevant legal acts, available at

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/general_food_law_en

Pesticide Action Network Europe

<https://www.pan-europe.info/> (PAN)

<https://www.pan-europe.info/sites/pan-europe.info/files/public/resources/press-releases/PAN%20press%20release%20EFSA%20pesticide%20monitoring%20report%202018.pdf>)

Information on the Brexit perspective of EU food law:

Notice to stakeholders “Withdrawal of the United Kingdom and EU Food Law” (2018)

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/notice_brexit_eu_food_law.pdf