

Controls of pesticide residues in food Belgium 2009



Results of the official controls in accordance to Regulation (CE) N°396/2005 and Commission Regulation (EC) N° 1213/2008

Disclaimer: In accordance to article 31 of Regulation (CE) N°396/2005, Member States shall submit their official control results concerning the previous calendar year to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Commission. Control results for 2009 were transmitted in a new harmonized format that makes EFSA capable to make a more accurate evaluation of the exposure of consumer to pesticide residues. The summary report below is the summary attached to the raw control data transmitted to EFSA. It is important to note that results were reported in a different way to EFSA and in the annual report of the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC). This can lead to differences in the figures in the two reports (classification of samples analysed out of the control plan, animal products, ...). Full control results are available on request to the FASFC.

1 BELGIUM

1.1 Summary of Results¹

In 2009, a total number of 2112 samples of fruits, vegetables, cereals, animal products and processed products (including baby food) were taken by the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) and analysed for the presence of pesticide residues in implementation of Regulation (CE) N° 396/2005.

Food products analysed (table 1) :

- **1871** samples were analysed in the framework of the control programme. 95,6% were conform to the MRL set in the legislation. Main products showing MRL exceeding are listed in table 2.
- **241** samples were analysed in the case of suspicion about the safety of a product (products from Thailand and the Dominican Republic, nicotine in wild mushrooms, ...), complaints and follow-up of violations found previously. 73,9% were conform to the MRL set in the legislation. Main MRL exceeding were observed on chilipeppers from Thailand and Ouganda and on lauki from the Dominican Republic.

Table 2: Main products showing MRL exceeding

Products	Main origin
Passion fruits	Kenya
Chilipepers	Thailand and Ouganda
Strawberries	Egypt
Lauki	The Dominican Republic
Currants, celery, leek, spinach and parsley	Belgium

Table 1: Food products analysed for pesticides residues in 2009 by sampling strategy

Sampling strategy	Samples	Analysed	without residues	with residues at or below MRL	> MRL ²
Control programme	Fruit, vegetables & cereals	1668	29,4%	65,7%	4,7%
	Processed products	98	75,5%	23,5%	1%
	Animal products	15	100%	0	0
	Baby food	90	97,8%	0	2,2%
		1871	35,8%	59,8%	4,4%
Enforcement	Fruit, vegetables & cereals	217	30%	41%	29%
	Processed products	24	16,7%	83,3%	0
		241	28,7%	45,2%	26,1%
	TOTAL	2112	35%	58,1%	6,9%

Origin of the products: 42% of the products analysed were grown in Belgium, 21% came from the EU and 31% were imported from third countries. The origin of 2,9% of the products was not known. Like previous years, products imported from third countries (12%) showed proportionally more MRL violations than products grown in BE (5,2%) or in the EU (3,3%).

1.2 Organisation of monitoring programmes and Sampling

1.2.1 Responsibilities

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC), under the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture, is the competent authority for the control of pesticides residues in foodstuffs (<http://www.afsca.be>).

¹ It should be noted that upon submission of the data, EFSA validated the data and recoded the names of the food and the pesticide names reported by the participating countries to make them comparable. Differences in the data published separately by the FASFC and the data reported in the present report may occur due to this recoding.

² In the context of this report the term MRL exceeding refers to the numerical exceeding of the legal limit without considering the measurement uncertainty of 50%, according to SANCO/3131/2007.

1.2.2 Design of Programmes (priorities, targeting, criteria for the percentage of samples to be taken from the organic sector)

The control programme does not provide for a total random analysis but is risk based. The programme is drawn up following the general statistical approach employed within the FASFC³. Several factors were taken into account: toxicity of pesticides, exceeding observed in previous years in Belgium and in other Member States, RASFF messages, food consumption figures and all other useful information. All groups of fruits and vegetables are included in the programme and a rolling programme is applied for less important commodities.

The coordinated control programme of the European Commission and some targeted sampling (mainly on products from Thailand and the Dominican Republic) were also included in the national programme.

The FASFC stipulates the target pesticides for each sample type, and allocates samples to the different laboratories.

1.2.3 Sampling: personnel, procedures, sampling points

Samples are taken by trained officers according to Directive 2002/63/EG, mainly at auctions, import points, wholesalers and processors.

1.2.4 Enforcement action

When non-compliant samples are identified, the batch is seized, if available, and prevented from entering the market. An assessment of risk to the consumer is performed on all non-compliant samples and the appropriate measures such as recall and RASFF notification are taken⁴. Follow-up action is taken to verify the violation and to identify its cause. When non-compliant samples are identified, the producer or importer is subject to enhanced control and an official report is made and sent to the legal department of the FASFC which proposes a fine. If the fine is not paid, or in case of repeated offences, the matter is taken to court .

1.3 Quality assurance

1.3.1 Accreditation status of laboratories, number of laboratories

Five ISO 17020 accredited laboratories take part to the national control programme in 2009.

1.3.2 Analytical methods used

Samples were analysed by means of multi- and single-residue methods covering more than 375 pesticides residues.

1.3.3 Participation in proficiency tests

Laboratories took part to proficiency test organised by the EU (EUPT-AO4, EUPT-FV11, EUPT-C3, EUPT-SRM4) or other organisations like FAPAS.

³ Maudoux J-P., Saegerman C., Rettigner C., Houins G., Van Huffel X. & Berkvens D., Food safety surveillance by a risk based control programming: approach applied by the Belgian federal agency for the safety of the food chain (FASFC), Vet. Quart. 2006, 28(4): 140-154. <http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/publicationsthematiques/food-safety.asp>

⁴ The actions to be taken in case a MRL is exceeded are described in a procedure available on the website of the FASFC (http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/autocontrole/util/doc_util_fr.asp).

1.3.4 Implementation of EU quality control procedures

All laboratories applied the quality control procedures specified in the guidelines document No. SANCO/3131/2007.

1.3.5 Analytical uncertainty

As specified in document SANCO/3131/2007, a default expanded uncertainty figure of 50% on the results was used by the FASFC in cases of enforcement decisions (cases of MRL-exceeding).

1.4 Other information

<http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/productionvegetale/pesticides/>

Annex 1 : Evolution of the detection of pesticide residues in fruit, vegetables and cereals in the last years (in accordance to figures reported in the FASFC report for the comparison)

