Managing non-authorised substances under the EU Organic Regulation

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Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products, on the presence of products and substances not authorised […] for use in organic production and on the assessment of the national rules

Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848

What is changing and why?

The European Union (EU) Organic Regulation 2018/848 governs organic production and labelling, with a strong emphasis on ensuring the integrity of organic products throughout the supply chain. In the context of integrity of organic products, the presence of residues of non-authorised substances at any stage of the supply chain must be investigated. This new report by the European Commission addresses the measures taken in the EU when non-authorised substances are detected, including in products imported from non-EU countries. The report presents information collected from individual EU countries, and from a study by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) about non-authorised substances detected in organic labelled products.

EFSA investigated the 21 non-authorised substances most frequently detected in organic products to better understand the sources of contamination. These included spray drift from conventional farming (24.1%), lack of precautionary measures by operators (16.7%), use of non-authorised substances (15.9%), and contamination at earlier stages of the supply chain (10.6%) (Table 1). Table 2 indicates the stage of the supply chain when the substances were detected.

The EFSA study confirms that organic products are significantly less likely than conventional products to contain pesticide residues. Overall, the European Commission concludes that the EU organic control system is robust and functioning effectively. While operational challenges remain, particularly regarding investigation timelines, costs, and consistency across authorities, no major regulatory changes are thought to be necessary at this stage. The focus will be on improving harmonisation, sharing best practices, and strengthening cooperation among stakeholders to ensure continued confidence in the EU organic label.

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Actions

During an official investigation into the presence of contaminants, the products affected cannot normally be placed on the EU market as organic or in-conversion pending the results of the investigation. This can be problematic in the case of fresh products with a short shelf life. Where contamination is linked to non-compliance (e.g. use of prohibited substances or inadequate preventive measures), the product cannot be marketed as organic. Operators are required to implement corrective actions, and failure to do so may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification.

It is critical to avoid any risk of contamination in organic and in-conversion products for export to the EU. This report highlights best practices, including strict separation of organic and non-organic products, use of buffer zones, proper cleaning of equipment, risk-based sampling, and continuous training of operators and control bodies. Strong traceability and internal controls are essential to prevent and manage contamination risks.

Timeline

The European Commission's report was published on 31 March 2026.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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Tables & Figures

Table 1
Stages in the organic supply chain where contamination was detected[1]

Substance	Occurrences	Supply chain stage					
		Production (%)	Preparation (%)	Storing (%)	Distribution (%)	Import (%)	Placed on market (%)
Fosetyl-Al	1,031	42.7	29.5	6.2	15.5	1.9	3.4
Folpet (sum)	449	75.2	11.6	3.4	8.0	0.8	1.1
Tebuconazole	437	82.0	6.5	4.9	3.3	1.1	2.2
Boscalid	411	74.0	8.5	7.1	5.4	1.4	3.3
Fluopyram	370	85.9	4.5	3.7	3.7	0.3	1.9
Glyphosate	355	48.0	12.5	12.3	11.5	12.3	2.9
Cypermethrin	327	50.7	9.2	17.8	6.9	11.2	3.4
Difenoconazole	320	80.6	6.6	6.9	3.9	1.2	0.6
Deltamethrin	311	72.4	8.5	14.8	2.7	0.3	1.2
Lambda-cyhalothrin	308	76.7	6.9	7.2	5.0	1.6	1.6
Acetamiprid	262	72.1	3.9	5.3	4.6	2.5	3.9
Azoxystrobin	216	65.5	9.7	10.2	5.3	6.6	2.2
Pendimethalin	180	70.0	9.1	4.8	4.3	0.0	0.5
Pirimiphos-methyl	160	31.7	19.7	30.6	11.5	4.4	1.1
Cyprodinil	132	76.8	4.2	2.8	4.2	2.1	4.2
Fludioxonil	119	69.6	8.0	12.0	8.8	0.8	0.8
Chloridazon	115	79.7	3.4	8.5	4.2	1.7	1.7
Imidacloprid	97	66.3	5.1	12.2	4.1	6.1	6.1
Pyriproxyfen	68	77.7	8.2	1.2	2.4	7.1	3.5
Chlormequat	65	44.3	25.7	14.3	4.3	2.9	5.7
Spirotetramat	64	49.4	13.6	12.4	3.7	2.5	1.2
Average	–	**66.2**	**10.2**	**9.5**	**5.9**	**3.3**	**2.5**

1. EU Member State data, 2022–2024.

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Source: based on Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Report on the implementation of Art. 29 of the Organic Regulation

Table 2
Sources and causes of contamination in organic products[1]

Substance	Occurrences	Sources (%)			Causes (%)			N.I.[8]	Other
		Spray drift[2]	Measures not taken[3]	Products not authorised[4]	Contamination at prior stage[5]	Commingling[6]	Traceability[7]		
Fosetyl-Al	1,031	23.0	5.2	2.1	7.0	0.2	0.1	49.5	0.0
Folpet (sum)	449	58.4	7.1	6.4	5.3	3.6	0.2	10.5	9.4
Tebuconazole	437	35.4	22.1	16.2	5.5	0.5	0.5	10.0	9.2
Boscalid	411	27.1	11.1	14.8	7.8	0.7	0.0	14.6	23.4
Fluopyram	370	36.7	9.5	11.6	5.4	0.6	0.0	7.8	27.8
Glyphosate	355	9.0	7.1	12.7	20.9	1.1	3.7	22.3	23.1
Cypermethrin	327	20.4	26.5	13.8	11.3	0.9	1.5	14.6	10.7
Difenoconazole	320	24.4	28.7	22.5	4.7	1.6	0.3	8.8	9.1
Deltamethrin	311	29.9	20.8	16.7	7.4	4.2	0.3	10.6	9.6
Lambda-cyhalothrin	308	16.8	30.5	30.5	6.5	0.3	0.0	10.1	5.2
Acetamiprid	262	14.7	29.9	28.3	6.8	2.8	1.2	10.4	6.0
Azoxystrobin	216	22.7	14.4	23.6	10.2	1.4	0.5	11.6	15.7
Pendimethalin	180	31.1	7.8	28.9	3.9	1.1	0.0	10.0	17.2
Pirimiphos-methyl	160	5.6	13.1	15.0	33.1	5.0	0.6	20.0	7.5
Cyprodinil	132	40.2	6.1	20.5	8.3	0.8	0.0	10.6	13.6
Fludioxonil	119	14.3	21.0	13.5	11.8	3.4	0.8	11.8	23.5
Chloridazon	115	23.7	10.2	0.8	5.9	0.0	0.0	7.6	51.7
Imidacloprid	97	11.3	35.1	9.3	11.3	0.0	1.0	13.4	18.6
Pyriproxyfen	68	18.8	22.4	23.5	9.4	1.2	0.0	17.7	7.1
Chlormequat	65	18.5	12.3	0.0	29.2	4.6	1.5	20.0	13.9
Spirotetramat	64	23.4	9.4	23.4	10.9	0.0	0.0	21.9	9.4
Average	–	**24.1**	**16.7**	**15.9**	**10.6**	**1.6**	**0.6**	**14.9**	**14.8**

1. EU Member State data, 2022–2024.
2. Spray drift of products or substances not authorised in organic production.
3. Operator has not taken the precautionary measures referred to in Art. 28(1) of the Organic Regulation.
4. Operator has used products or substances not authorised in organic production.
5. Contamination occurred in the previous stage of the supply chain.
6. Commingling of organic or in-conversion productions with non-organic or in-conversion products.
7. Lack of traceability.
8. Source and cause of contamination was not identified.

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