Maximum residue levels for copper compounds

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EU to raise MRLs for copper compounds on certain foods

Draft Commission Regulation amending Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for copper compounds in or on certain products

Draft Annex II (PLAN/2025/350 draft v3)

Update

The European Union (EU) will raise the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for copper compounds on a wide range of products.

The European Commission initially proposed to reduce the MRLs on certain other products. However, this has been postponed to allow more opportunity to collect and review data for those products.

Impacted products

Almonds, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nut kernels, pistachios, walnuts, apples, pears, quinces, medlars, loquats/Japanese medlars, cherries, peaches, table grapes, wine grapes, strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, currants (black, red, white), gooseberries (green, red, yellow), rose hips, mulberries (black and white), azaroles/Mediterranean medlars, elderberries, kiwi fruits (green, red, yellow), potatoes, horseradishes, spring onions/green onions, Welsh onions, tomatoes, aubergines/eggplants, sweet peppers/bell peppers, melons, pumpkins, watermelons, Chinese cabbages/pe-tsai, kales, lamb's lettuces, lettuces, escaroles, cresses and other sprouts and shoots, land cresses, Roman rocket/rucola, red mustards, baby leaf crops, spinaches, purslanes, chards/beet leaves, watercresses, chervil, chives, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil and edible flowers, laurel/bay leaves, tarragon, grape leaves and similar species, celery leaves, leeks, globe artichokes, buckwheat, sorghum, hops, liver (swine, cattle, sheep, goat, other farmed terrestrial animals), muscle (goat), honey and other apiculture products, amphibians and reptiles, terrestrial vertebrate animals, wild terrestrial invertebrate animals

What is changing?

The EU is amending the MRLs for copper compounds on certain products, as summarised in Table 1.

The European Commission initially proposed to lower the MRLs on certain other products, but this has been postponed to allow stakeholders to submit monitoring data to the European Food Safety Authority for evaluation (European Commission 2025).

The residue definition will be changed from “copper compounds (copper)” to “total copper”.

Why?

The changes are based on updated scientific assessments by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA 2025), which reviewed all sources of exposure and considered both authorised uses of copper as a pesticide and the widespread natural presence of copper in soil and water.

Timeline

The Regulation is expected to be published and to apply from April 2026.

Recommended Actions

EFSA collects a wide range of chemical data on an annual basis. The process of MRL setting is influenced by the scope and representativity of the monitoring data available to EFSA to conduct their analysis. It is therefore in the interest of operators in non-EU countries to work with partners and counterparts in the EU to submit data as part of the annual monitoring of chemical data (European Commission 2025). Data must be submitted by European partners in the specific format required by EFSA. For further information on how to submit data, see EFSA (2020, 2026).

Background

MRLs are set in accordance with the rules set out in Regulation 396/2005. For information on current MRLs for other substances, please consult the EU Pesticide Residues database.

Resources

EFSA (2020) Sending data to EFSA – a short guide [video].

EFSA (2025) Statement on the update of maximum residue levels (MRLs) for copper compounds in light of the EFSA scientific opinion on the re■evaluation of the health■based guidance values (HBGVs) and exposure assessment from all sources. EFSA Journal, 23(2): e9271.

EFSA (2026) Data collection: chemical monitoring.

European Commission (2025) Summary Report, Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed Section Phytopharmaceuticals – Pesticide Residues, 24–25 November 2025.

Sources

Draft Commission Regulation as regards maximum residue levels for copper compounds in or on certain products

Draft Annex II (PLAN/2025/350 draft v3)

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Table & Figures

Table 1
Changes to maximum residue levels related to copper

Food category	Products	Old MRL: for copper compounds (mg/kg)	New MRL: for total copper (mg/kg)
Tree nuts	Almonds, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts/cobnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nut kernels, pistachios, walnuts	30	40
Pome fruits	Apples, pears, quinces, medlars, loquats/Japanese medlars	5	6
Stone fruits	Cherries	5	10
	Peaches	5	8
Berries and small fruits	Table grapes, wine grapes	50	100
	Strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, currants (black, red, white), gooseberries (green, red, yellow), rose hips, mulberries (black and white), azaroles/Mediterranean medlars, elderberries	5	15
Miscellaneous fruit	Kiwi fruits (green, red, yellow)	20	30
Root and tuber vegetables	Potatoes	5	7
	Horseradishes	5	6
Bulb vegetables	Spring onions/green onions and Welsh onions	5	70
Fruiting vegetables	Tomatoes, aubergines/eggplants, melons, pumpkins, watermelons	5	10
	Sweet peppers/bell peppers	5	20
Brassica vegetables	Chinese cabbages/pe-tsai, kales	20	30
Leaf vegetables, herbs and edible flowers	Lamb's lettuces/corn salads, lettuces, escaroles/broad-leaved endives, cresses and other sprouts and shoots, land cresses, Roman rocket/rucola, red mustards, baby leaf crops (including brassica species)	100	150
	Spinaches, purslanes, chards/beet leaves, watercresses, chervil, chives, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil and edible flowers, laurel/bay leaves, tarragon	20	150
	Grape leaves and similar species	20	30
	Celery leaves	50	150
Stem vegetables	Leeks	20	70
	Globe artichokes	20	30
Cereals	Buckwheat and other pseudocereals, sorghum	10	20
Hops		1,000	1,500
Products of animal origin:			
Swine	Liver	30	60
Cattle, sheep, poultry, other farmed terrestrial animals	Liver	30	300
Goat	Liver	30	150
Goat	Muscle	5	6
Honey and other apiculture products		–	1.5
Amphibians and reptiles		–	6
Terrestrial vertebrate animals		–	6
Wild terrestrial invertebrate animals		–	70

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Source: based on PLAN/2025/350 draft v3

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