

# Maximum residue levels for cypermethrins

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EU explores new approach to MRLs for cypermethrins

[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 cypermethrins in or on certain products [original Commission proposal, now under review]

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## Update

The European Commission is reviewing its approach to setting maximum residue levels (MRLs) for cypermethrins. In December 2023, it informed the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS) Committee that the EU intended to reduce MRLs to the limit of determination (LOD) on several products, and to 0.005 mg/kg (which is below the standard LOD of 0.01 mg/kg) on oranges, pears, melons, and potatoes ([G/SPS/N/EU/702](#)). (The LOD is the lowest level that can be detected using the most modern and reliable analytical methods.)

Following comments by non-EU countries and stakeholders, the EU is discussing a new approach that maintains current MRLs for cypermethrins (sum of isomers), but sets separate MRLs for the more toxic alpha-cypermethrin.

## Impacted products

To be defined

## What is changing?

In December 2023, the EU proposed to amend the MRLs for "cypermethrins (sum of isomers)" on certain products. The group of cypermethrins consists of cypermethrin and its isomers alpha-cypermethrin, beta-cypermethrin, and zeta-cypermethrin. The current official EU definition of cypermethrin is "cypermethrin including other mixtures of constituent isomers (sum of isomers)".

However, during discussions with non-EU countries and stakeholders, it was established that alpha-cypermethrin is the particular source of risk to consumers, and that it is technically possible to set and test for MRLs for alpha-cypermethrin alone. This would allow the EU to maintain existing MRLs on cypermethrin, which are also in line with Codex MRLs. The Commission is asking the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to set MRLs for alpha-cypermethrin.

## Why?

Following a review of the existing MRLs for cypermethrins (sum of isomers), [EFSA \(2023\)](#) recommended reducing the MRLs to the LOD for products where the safety of MRLs could not be ensured, or where data were missing. However, following further information gathered during discussions on the initial Commission proposal, it was decided to establish separate MRLs for alpha-cypermethrin. EFSA will be requested to provide a statement on alpha-cypermethrin MRLs.

## Timeline

To enforce the new limits, authorities and businesses need reliable ways to test for alpha-cypermethrin. The EU plans to finish confirming these testing methods by the end of 2025, and the new limits for alpha-cypermethrin are expected to take effect in 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 (2023) [Review of the existing maximum residue levels for cypermethrins according to Article 12 of Regulation \(EC\) No 396/2005](#). EFSA Journal, 21(3): 7800.

European Commission (2024) [Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed \(Section Phytopharmaceuticals – Pesticide Residues\)](#), 23–24 September.

## Sources

[Draft](#) Commission Regulation as regards maximum residue levels for cypermethrins in or on certain products

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