Maximum residue levels for ethephon

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EU amends MRLs for ethephon

Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/215 of 29 January 2026 amending Annexes II and V to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for dimoxystrobin, ethephon and propamocarb in or on certain products

Update

The European Union (EU) has amended the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for ethephon.

Revised MRLs will have a particular impact on exporters of **blueberries** and **tree nuts** (except hazelnuts and walnuts) where the MRL will be reduced to the limit of determination (LOD). (The LOD is the lowest level that can be detected using the most modern and reliable analytical methods.)

MRLs are also reduced on **apples**, **pineapples**, **rye**, and **wheat**. The MRL for **barley** is increased. The EU has also lowered the LODs on a wide range of products.

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Impacted products

Grapefruits, oranges, lemons, limes, mandarins, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, coconuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nut kernels, pistachios, apples, quinces, medlars, loquats/Japanese medlars, apricots, peaches, blackberries, dewberries, raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, currants, gooseberries, rose hips, mulberries, elderberries, dates, kumquats, carambolas, jambolans, kiwi fruits, lychees, passionfruits, prickly pears, star apples, American persimmons/Virginia kaki, avocados, bananas, mangoes, papayas, granate apples/pomegranates, cherimoyas, guavas, pineapples, breadfruits, durians, soursops/guanabanas, potatoes, cassava roots/manioc, sweet potatoes, yams, arrowroots, beetroots, carrots, celeriacs, horseradishes, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, parsley roots, parsley, radishes, salsifies, swedes/rutabagas, turnips, garlic, onions, shallots, spring onions/green onions and Welsh onions, sweet peppers/bell peppers, aubergines/eggplants, okra/lady's fingers, cucumbers, gherkins, courgettes, melons, pumpkins, watermelons, sweet corn, broccoli, cauliflowers, Brussels sprouts, head cabbages, Chinese cabbages/pe-tsai, kales, kohlrabies, 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), spinaches, purslanes, chards/beet leaves, grape leaves, watercresses, witloofs/Belgian endives, chervil, chives, celery leaves, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil and edible flowers, laurel/bay leaves, tarragon, beans (with pods), beans (without pods), peas (with pods), peas (without pods), lentils, asparagus, cardoons, celeries, Florence fennels, globe artichokes, leeks, rhubarbs, bamboo shoots, palm hearts, cultivated fungi, wild fungi, mosses and lichens, algae and prokaryotes, beans (dry), lentils (dry), peas (dry), lupins/lupini beans, linseeds, peanuts/groundnuts, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, rapeseeds/canola seeds, soyabeans, mustard seeds, pumpkin seeds, safflower seeds, borage seeds, gold of pleasure seeds, hemp seeds, castor beans, oil palm kernels, oil palm fruits, kapok, barley, buckwheat, pseudocereals, maize/corn, common millet/proso millet, oats, rice, rye, sorghum, wheat, teas, coffee beans, chamomile, hibiscus/roselle, rose, jasmine, lime/linden, strawberry, rooibos, maté, valerian, ginseng, cocoa beans, carobs/Saint John's breads, hops, anise/aniseed, black caraway/black cumin, celery, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, nutmeg, fruit spices, allspice/pimento, Sichuan pepper, caraway, cardamom, juniper berry, peppercorn (black, green, white), vanilla, tamarind, cinnamon, liquorice, turmeric/curcuma, cloves, capers, saffron, mace, sugar beet roots, sugar canes, chicory roots, milk (cattle, sheep, goat, horse), birds' eggs (chicken, duck, geese, quail), amphibians, reptiles, terrestrial invertebrate animals, wild terrestrial vertebrate animals

What is changing?

The EU has amended the MRLs for ethephon as summarised in Table 1.

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Why?

When the EU renewed its approval for ethephon (see EU pesticide approvals, renewals, and extensions in 2023), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recommended lowering the acceptable daily intake (ADI) for this substance (EFSA 2023). Based on this reduced ADI, EFSA (2024) reviewed all MRLs for ethephon.

The European Commission also consulted the EU Reference Laboratories for residues of pesticides as regards the need to adapt certain LODs. Those laboratories proposed product-specific LODs for ethephon that are analytically achievable, ensuring compliance with updated safety and monitoring standards.

Timeline

The new MRLs apply from **19 August 2026**.

Products put on the EU market before 19 August 2026 that comply with current EU MRLs may remain on the market after that date, even if residues in the products exceed the new MRLs.

Exception: due to concerns about risks to consumers, after 19 August 2026 **apples and blueberries** with residues that exceed the ethephon MRLs may not remain on the market, even if they were compliant with MRLs that applied at the time when the products were placed on the market.

Recommended Actions

Suppliers of **apples**, **pineapples**, **rye**, and **wheat** should review their current use of ethephon and assess whether any changes will be needed to existing good agricultural practices (GAPs) to ensure compliance with the new MRLs. Suppliers of **blueberries** and **affected nuts** should evaluate their current use of ethephon and explore possible alternative solutions.

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.

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Resources

EFSA (2023) Peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance ethephon. EFSA Journal, 21(1): 7742.

EFSA (2024) Targeted review of the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for ethephon. EFSA Journal, 22(4): e8757.

Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/215 as regards maximum residue levels for dimoxystrobin, ethephon and propamocarb in or on certain products

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Tables & Figures

Table 1
Changes to maximum residue levels for ethephon

Food category	Products	Ethephon (mg/kg)	
		Old MRL	New MRL
Citrus fruits	Grapefruits, oranges, lemons, limes, mandarins	0.05*	0.01*
Tree nuts	Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, coconuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nut kernels, pistachios	0.1	0.02*
Pome fruits	Apples	0.8	0.7
	Quinces, medlars, loquats/Japanese medlars	0.05*	0.01*
Stone fruits	Apricots, peaches	0.05*	0.01*
Berries and small fruits	Strawberries, blackberries, dewberries, raspberries (red and yellow), cranberries, currants (black, red, white), gooseberries (green, red, yellow), rose hips, mulberries (black and white), azaroles/Mediterranean medlars, elderberries	0.05*	0.01*
	Blueberries	20	0.01*
Miscellaneous fruit	Dates, kumquats, carambolas, jambuls/ jambolans, kiwi fruits, litchis/lychees, passionfruits/maracujas, prickly pears/cactus fruits, star apples/cainitos, American persimmons/ Virginia kaki, bananas, mangoes, papayas, granate apples/pomegranates, cherimoyas, guavas, breadfruits, durians, soursops/guanabanas	0.05*	0.01*
	Avocados	0.05*	0.02*
	Pineapples	2	1.5
Root and tuber vegetables	Potatoes, cassava roots/manioc, sweet potatoes, yams, arrowroots, beetroots, carrots, celeriac/ turnip rooted celeries, horseradishes, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, parsley roots/Hamburg root parsley, radishes, salsifies, swedes/rutabagas, turnips	0.05*	0.01*
Bulb vegetables	Garlic, onions, shallots, spring onions/green onions and Welsh onions	0.05*	0.01*
Fruiting vegetables	Sweet peppers/bell peppers, aubergines/ eggplants, okra/lady's fingers, cucumbers, gherkins, courgettes, melons, pumpkins, watermelons, sweet corn	0.05*	0.01*
Brassica vegetables	Broccoli, cauliflowers, Brussels sprouts, head cabbages, Chinese cabbages/pe-tsai, kales, kohlrabis	0.05*	0.01*
Leaf vegetables	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, spinaches, purslanes, chards/beet leaves, grape leaves, watercresses, witloofs/Belgian endives	0.05*	0.01*
Herbs and edible flowers	Chervil, chives, celery leaves, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil and edible flowers, laurel/bay leaves, tarragon	0.05*	0.02*
Legume vegetables	Beans (with pods), beans (without pods), peas (with pods), peas (without pods), lentils	0.05*	0.01*
Stem vegetables	Asparagus, cardoons, celeries, Florence fennels, globe artichokes, leeks, rhubarbs, bamboo shoots, palm hearts	0.05*	0.01*
Fungi, mosses, and lichens	Cultivated fungi, wild fungi, mosses and lichens	0.05*	0.01*
Algae and prokaryotes	Algae and prokaryotes	0.05*	0.01*
Pulses	Beans, lentils, dried peas, lupins/lupini beans	0.05*	0.01*

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Table 1
Continued

Food category	Products	Ethephon (mg/kg)	
		Old MRL	New MRL
Oilseeds	Linseeds, peanuts/groundnuts, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, rapeseeds/canola seeds, soyabeans, mustard seeds, pumpkin seeds, safflower seeds, borage seeds, gold of pleasure seeds, hemp seeds, castor beans	0.1*	0.02*
Oil fruits	Oil palm kernels, oil palm fruits, kapok	0.05*	0.02*
Cereals	Barley	1	1.5
	Wheat	1	0.5
	Rye	1	0.8
	Buckwheat and other pseudocereals, maize/corn, common millet/proso millet, oats, rice, sorghum	0.05*	0.01*
Teas		0.1*	0.05*
Coffee beans		0.1*	0.05*
Herbal infusions	Chamomile, hibiscus/roselle, rose, jasmine, lime/linden, strawberry, rooibos, mate/maté, valerian, ginseng	0.1*	0.05*
Cocoa beans		0.1*	0.05*
Carobs/Saint John's breads		0.1*	0.05*
Hops		0.1*	0.05*
Spices	Anise/aniseed, black caraway/black cumin, celery, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, nutmeg, allspice/pimento, Sichuan pepper, caraway, juniper berry, peppercorn (black, green, white), vanilla, tamarind, cinnamon, liquorice, turmeric/curcuma, horseradish, cloves, capers, saffron, mace	0.1*	0.05*
Sugar plants	Sugar beet roots, sugar canes, chicory roots	0.05*	0.01*
Milk	Cattle, sheep, goat, horse	0.05*	0.01*
Birds' eggs	Chicken, duck, geese, quail	0.05*	0.02*
Amphibians and reptiles		0.05*	0.01*
Terrestrial invertebrate animals		0.05*	0.01*
Wild terrestrial vertebrate animals		0.05*	0.01*

* Limit of determination.

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Source: based on Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/215.

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