

Maximum residue levels for ethephon

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EU proposes to amend MRLs for ethephon

Draft Commission Regulation 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

Draft Annex: PLAN/2024/1305 R2 DRAFT

Update

The European Commission has informed the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS) Committee that it intends to amend the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for ethephon ([G/SPS/N/EU/801](#)). Revised MRLs will have a particular impact on exporters of **blueberries** 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 proposed to be reduced on **apples, pineapples, rye, and wheat**. The MRL for **barley** will be increased. The EU also proposes to lower the LODs on a wide range of products.

Impacted products

Grapefruits, oranges, lemons, limes, mandarins, apples, quinces, medlars, loquats/Japanese medlars, apricots, peaches, blackberries, dewberries, raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, currants, gooseberries, rose hips, mulberries, elderberries, dates, kumquats, carambolas, jambuls/jambolans, kiwi fruits, litchis/lychees, passionfruits/maracujas, prickly pears/cactus, star apples/cainitos, 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/turnip-rooted celeries, horseradishes, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, parsley roots/Hamburg 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 proposes to amend the MRLs for ethephon as summarised in Table 1. Also, the EU proposes to lower the LOD on fruits, vegetables, cereals, sugar plants, and animal products from 0.05 to 0.02 or 0.01 mg/kg, and on oilseeds, oil fruits, teas, coffee, cocoa, and spices from 0.1 to 0.05 mg/kg.

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

New MRLs are expected to apply from approximately January 2026.

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 (GAP) to ensure compliance with the new MRLs. Suppliers of **blueberries** in particular should evaluate their current use of ethephon and explore possible alternative solutions in anticipation of these MRL changes.

Authorities in countries that are members of the WTO can provide feedback on the EU's proposal ([G/SPS/N/EU/801](#)) by emailing the [EU SPS Enquiry Point](#) until **3 February 2025**.

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) [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

[Draft](#) Commission Regulation as regards maximum residue levels for dimoxystrobin, ethephon and propamocarb in or on certain products

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Table & Figures

Table 1 Changes to maximum residue levels for ethephon			
Food category	Products	Ethephon (mg/kg)	
		Old MRL	New MRL
Pome fruits	Apples	0.8	0.7
Berries and small fruits	Blueberries	20	0.01*
Miscellaneous fruit	Pineapples	2	1.5
Cereals	Barley	1	1.5
	Rye	1	0.8
	Wheat	1	0.5
* Limit of determination.			
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Source: based on [Draft Annex](#)

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