Maximum residue levels for phosphonic acid

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EU increases MRL for potassium phosphonates on cherries

Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/876 of 21 April 2026 amending Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for acetamiprid, aclonifen, deltamethrin, oxathiapiprolin and potassium phosphonates in or on certain products

Update

The European Union (EU) has increased the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for potassium phosphonates (expressed as phosphonic acid) on cherries.

Impacted products

Cherries, lamb's lettuces/corn salads, escaroles/broad-leaved endives, cresses and other sprouts/shoots, land cresses, Roman rocket, red mustards, baby leaf crops, purslanes, chards/beet leaves, watercresses, globe artichokes, poppy seeds, barley, oats, rye

What is changing?

The EU has increased the MRLs for phosphonic acid on cherries from 8 to 80 mg/kg.

In June 2025, the EU increased the MRLs for this substance on certain salads and cereals, globe artichokes, and poppy seeds as summarised in Table 1.

Why?

Following requests in relation to use of potassium phosphonates (a salt included in the definition of phosphonic acid), the MRLs for phosphonic acid have been updated based on new data evaluated by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA 2024; EFSA 2025), which confirmed that the new levels are safe for consumers.

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Timeline

The new MRL for cherries applies from **12 May 2026**.

The MRLs on certain salads and cereals, globe artichokes, and poppy seeds have applied since 17 April 2025.

Background

In 2024, the EU changed its residue definition for fosetyl-Al, potassium phosphonates, and disodium phosphonates to “phosphonic acid and its salts”.

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

Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/581 as regards maximum residue levels for cycloxydim, dichlorprop-P, flupyradifurone, methyl nonyl ketone, plant oils/citronella oil, potassium sorbate and potassium phosphonate in or on certain products

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/2619 as regards maximum residue levels for fosetyl, potassium phosphonates and disodium phosphonate in or on certain products

EFSA (2024) Modification of the existing maximum residue levels in various plant commodities resulting from the use of potassium phosphonates. EFSA Journal, 22(6): e8842.

EFSA (2025) Modification of the existing maximum residue levels for potassium phosphonates in apricots and cherries. EFSA Journal, 23(2): e9232.

Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/876 as regards maximum residue levels for acetamiprid, aclonifen, deltamethrin, oxathiapiprolin and potassium phosphonates in or on certain products

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Tables & Figures

Table 1
Changes to maximum residue levels for phosphonic acid

Food category	Products	Phosphonic acid and its salts expressed as phosphonic acid (mg/kg)	
		Old MRL	New MRL
Leaf vegetables, herbs, edible flowers	Lamb's lettuces/corn salads, escaroles/ broad-leaved endives, cresses and other sprouts/shoots, land cresses, Roman rocket/rucola, red mustards, baby leaf crops	150	200
	Purslanes	100	200
	Chards/beet leaves	70	200
	Watercresses	1.5*	90
Stem vegetables	Globe artichokes	100	150
Oilseeds	Poppy seeds	1.5*	200
Cereals	Barley, oats, rye	1.5*	80

* Limit of determination.

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Source: based on Regulation 2025/581

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