

Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food

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[Draft](#) Commission Regulation as regards maximum levels of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons in food

[Draft Annex](#) [PLAN/2023/2345 ANNEX CIS]

What is changing and why?

As mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) are dangerous to humans, the European Union (EU) is proposing to set maximum permitted levels of MOAH in certain foods, as set out in Table 1.

The EU proposal is a significant change compared to the situation today. Currently, EU Member States can withdraw products or recall them from the market where MOAH levels are higher than the following limits of quantification (LOQ):

- 0.5 mg/kg for dry foods with a low fat/oil content ($\leq 4\%$ fat/oil)
- 1 mg/kg for foods with a higher fat/oil content ($> 4\%$ fat/oil, $\leq 50\%$ fat/oil)
- 2 mg/kg for fats/oils or foods with $> 50\%$ fat/oil.

But these limits are not set in EU law. The EU now intends to reinforce these limits by putting maximum levels in law.

Actions

This proposal has been notified to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Competent authorities of countries that are members of the WTO can submit comments on the EU's proposal by emailing the [EU SPS Enquiry Point](#) until **10 May 2026**.

Suppliers of food sectors included in Table 1 in particular should increase monitoring of MOAH to identify any presence of these substances in their products. When MOAH are identified in food, suppliers should check all steps of the supply process, identify the sources of contamination, and develop measures to avoid further contamination of their production.

Also see these AGRINFO resources:

- Guide with further information on mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH), their origins and effects, the EU's regulatory intentions, the sectors most affected, and actions required to prepare for compliance with new rules (available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese)
- Video recordings of MOH webinars (in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese)
- Questions and answers arising from the webinars (in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese).

Please note that these resources were produced before the notification of this proposal, and should be read together with the details in Table 1 and the full AGRINFO report.


Timeline

The European Commission aims to adopt maximum levels for MOAH in 2026 that will apply from 2027.

For more information see the [full record](#) on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest [AGRINFO Update](#) newsletters and [search](#) the database.

Tables & Figures

Table 1 Proposed maximum levels (MLs) for mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons ^{[1],[2]}		
Product	Maximum levels (mg/kg)	Remarks
Oilseeds and oil fruits	2.0	
Animal and vegetable fats and oils:		
Maize, rapeseed, sunflower, soyabean, and linseed oils; dairy butter and fat	2.0	
Groundnut, sesame, coconut, and cereal germ oils	6.0 from 01/01/2027 4.0 from 01/01/2028 2.0 from 01/01/2030	
Grape seed, cotton seed, blackcurrant seed, and argan oils	10.0 from 01/01/2027 5.0 from 01/01/2028 2.0 from 01/01/2030	
Olive pomace oil and refined olive pomace oil	10.0 from 01/01/2028 5.0 from 01/01/2029 2.0 from 01/01/2030	
Fish oils and oils from other marine organisms and algae	10.0 from 01/01/2027 5.0 from 01/01/2030	
Other oils and fats	4.0 from 01/01/2027 2.0 from 01/01/2028	Includes cocoa butter. Does not include essential oils and crude olive pomace oil
Products from maize, rapeseed, sunflower, soyabean, and linseed oils, and dairy butter and fat or the category "other oils and fats", where these contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > > 80% of fats and oils or > > 50% fat/oil content and only contain these fats and oils 	2.0 from 01/01/2028	
Tree nuts ^[3]	2.0	
Pulses	0.50	
Cereal grains (including rice)	0.50	
Products (except oils, see MLs above) containing > 80% cereals with fat/oil content: ^{[4],[5]}		
< 4%	0.50	
≥ 4% and ≤ 50%	1.0	
Milk	0.50	
Dairy products with fat/oil content: ^[4]		
< 4%	0.50	
≥ 4% and ≤ 50%	1.0	
> 50%	2.0	
<i>Continued ...</i>		

Table 1 Continued		
Product	Maximum levels (mg/kg)	Remarks
Cocoa beans	2.0 from 01/01/2030	
Cocoa mass	2.0	
Cocoa powder and fat-reduced cocoa powder	1.0	
Other confectionery, cocoa, and chocolate with fat/oil content: ^[4]		
< 4%	0.50	
≥ 4% and ≤ 50%	1.0	
> 50%	2.0	
Spices, dried herbs, dry tea and dry herbal and infusions ^[6]	10.0 from 01/01/2027 5.0 from 01/01/2030	
Foods for infants and young children ^[7] with fat/oil content: ^[4]		
< 4%	0.50	
≥ 4% and ≤ 50%	1.0	
> 50%	2.0	
Food supplements	10.0 from 01/01/2027 5.0 from 01/01/2030	
Food additives	Raw materials from which food additives are derived must comply with the MLs in this Regulation	
Processed and compound foods ^[8] containing ingredients for which there are MLs in this Regulation with fat/oil content:		
< 4%	0.50 from 01/01/2030	MLs only apply to instant tea, instant herbal infusions, and tea, ^[6] and not to other tea and herbal infusions
≥ 4% and ≤ 50%	1.0 from 01/01/2030	
> 50%	2.0 from 01/01/2030	
<p>^[1] Mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (≥C10 to ≤C50).</p> <p>^[2] To be added to the Annex of Regulation (EU) 2023/915.</p> <p>^[3] Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, coconuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine kernels, pistachios, walnuts.</p> <p>^[4] The fat/oil content refers to the declared fat/oil content or, in the absence of a declared fat/oil content, to the fat/oil content as determined by the competent authority.</p> <p>^[5] The maximum level does not apply to cereals used for the production of beer or distillates, provided that the remaining cereal residue is not placed on the market as food.</p> <p>^[6] MLs also apply when they are used as an ingredient in food.</p> <p>^[7] This includes infant formulas, follow-on formulas, young-child formulas, food for special medical purposes intended for infants and young children, baby food, processed cereal-based food for infants and young children, and drinks for infants and young.</p> <p>^[8] Until 31 December 2029, the ML that applies to processing compound foods should be the ML for the raw material taking into account the processing factor (the increase or reduction in MOAH that occurs). For further details see AGRINFO, Q&A, Upcoming EU rules on MOH, Q11.</p>		
 www.agrininfo.eu		

Source: based on [Draft Annex](#) [PLAN/2023/2345 ANNEX CIS]

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