

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002397/24
to the Commission**

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(4 November 2024)

Subject: Maximum residue limits of pesticides in feed imports

At the meeting of Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 4 September 2024, the European Food Safety Authority presented the annual report on pesticide residues in food. Part of the report deals with food produced in non-EU countries and concludes that the imported products have a higher presence of pesticide residues.

Grains intended for animal feed are among the agricultural products that the EU imports the most. However, as the European Food Safety Authority report points out, there is no maximum value for pesticide residues in feed and the pesticide content is not controlled.

This seems particularly problematic. In non-EU countries, certain pesticides are commonly used in pre-harvest, which could contribute to high levels of residues in grains. Moreover, as pre-harvest uses are severely limited in the EU, there is a gap in production standards.

1. Have the potential impact on animal and human health (through the consumption of dairy and meat) and the risk of accumulation in the environment been sufficiently taken into account to justify the absence of controls on pesticide residues in feed?
2. Is the Commission planning to make a legislative proposal on this subject in order to fill this gap?

Submitted: 4.11.2024

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(13 January 2025)

Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 ⁽¹⁾ sets maximum residue levels (MRLs) of pesticide in food and feed, covering the commodities listed in Annex I to that regulation.

The MRL Regulation thus covers products not only used for food, but also for feed, such as cereals, soybeans or oilseeds. In its presentation of 4 September 2024, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) referred to feed commodities exclusively used for feed production such as grass, hay or straw, for which exceptionally, no MRLs are established due their low impact on consumer health.

However, the uptake of pesticide residues by livestock via feed and the possible transfer of residues from feed to food of animal origin is an important element in EFSA's risk assessment prior to the approval of active substances.

The possible accumulation of residues in the environment, in particular in soil, and the uptake of these pesticide residues from the soil to crops used for food and feed is also assessed.

If necessary, restrictions are implemented in the approval conditions to limit the presence in the environment and/or the presence in food and feed.

Member States carry out official controls on pesticide residues in order to enforce compliance with the MRL Regulation. The presence of residues in feed is therefore controlled directly by analysing products used for food and feed purpose and indirectly by analysing food of animal origin.

The Commission has recently initiated discussions with Member States on possible options and procedures to set MRLs for specific feed products in the framework of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC; OJ L 70, 16/03/2005, p. 1-16.

⁽²⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/committees/paff-committees_en