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E-003755/2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.11.2025)

EU food labelling legislation¹ ensures a high level of transparency and protection of consumers' health and interests. It provides for a list of mandatory food information particulars on the characteristics specific to a food, in particular to enable consumers to make choices that suit their individual dietary needs and to identify the appropriate use of the food.

All food placed on the Union market must be safe and comply with the EU food-related legislation. In that context, within the EU, only pesticides complying with EU legislation may be used. Authorisation is granted only if a thorough risk assessment, conducted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009² and subsequently by the Member State where the pesticides are used, shows that there are no adverse effects on human or animal health or unacceptable effects on the environment. The Commission also sets maximum residue levels for pesticides in food³ to ensure all food is safe for consumption.

Annual reports on pesticide residues in food are published every year by EFSA covering over 100,000 samples from across the Union. Compliance rates are consistently high, with the most recent data⁴ showing that 98% of tested foodstuffs are within the legal limits.

Finally, as provided by EU food labelling legislation, voluntary food information such as 'pesticide residue free' or 'zero pesticide residue' statements must not mislead consumers, not be ambiguous or confusing for them, and must be based on relevant data. National authorities are responsible for the enforcement of these provisions, determining on a case-by-case basis whether the terms used are likely to mislead the consumer.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004 Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, pp. 18–63.

² Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC, OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, pp. 1–50.

³ 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, 16.3.2005, pp. 1–16.

⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/9398>.