

Control of pesticide residues in plant and animal products intended for human consumption

If you want to export plant and animal products for human consumption to the EU you have to check if your country has a robust system in place for checking for the presence of chemical substances and their residues. Regarding **animal products**, if your country's plans for residue monitoring have been approved by the European Commission, your country will be named in the EU's 'residues list'. Countries not named on the EU residues list can not export animal products to the EU. Concerning **plant products**, you should ensure that the active substances used to protect the plant are included in the EU Pesticide database.

Animals and animal products

Countries wishing to export food of animal origin to the EU are required to submit to the European Commission an annual residue monitoring plan per type of product. Once the plans are approved by the EU, the countries are **listed** in the "EU's residues list" ([CELEX 32011D0163](#)). Being listed on the 'residues list' is a prerequisite for export of food of animal origin to the EU. Besides, retention in this list is subject to an annual submission of the residue monitoring plan by your country guarantying its controls are equivalent to the EU ones. EU legislation ([CELEX 31996L0023](#)) explains the residues controls in food of animal origin to be carried out in the EU or in any country willing to export to the EU ([Annex I](#)).

Once your animal product arrives in the EU, samples of consignments may be drawn and tested for residues by [national reference laboratories](#). The conditions of such sampling and testing are described in EU legislation ([CELEX 32004R0136](#)).



Plants, plant products and their protection

Only active substances detailed in the [EU Pesticide Database](#) may be used to protect plants to be sold as food in the EU.

Once a substance is included in the list, individual EU countries must authorize products.

EU legislation ([CELEX 31991L0414](#)) explains the rules and procedures to handle active substances in food and the procedures EU countries has to follow to authorize plant products containing them.

Control of pesticide residues in the EU: the maximum residue levels (MRLs)

EU legislation ([CELEX 32005R0396](#)) explains the rules for pesticide residues and sets the EU pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs) in food and feed. Before entering the EU you must ensure that your animal or plant product does not contain chemicals and active substances higher than these limits.

The MRLs are structured as follows:

Annex I	List of products to which the MRLs apply, including animal products, fruits, vegetables, cereals, spices and certain edible plants
Annex II	List of EU definitive MRLs
Annex III	List of so-called EU temporary MRLs (pesticides for which, before 1 September 2008, MRLs were only set at national level),
Annex IV	List of pesticides for which no MRLs are needed because of their low risk
Annex V	List of pesticides for which a default limit other than 0,01 mg/kg will apply
Annex VI	List of conversion factors of MRLs for processed commodities.
Annex VII	List of pesticides used as fumigants for which the EU applied special derogations before placing them on the market

These MRLs are available at the [EU Pesticide Database](#).



Control and inspection

EU national authorities are responsible for the control and enforcement of the MRLs. Controls are organized in all EU countries by a coordinated multiannual EU control programme of pesticide residues in food of plant and animal origin established by the EU legislation ([CELEX 32011R1274](#)).

Following this programme, [national reference laboratories](#) regularly take and analyze samples to detect residues in the EU countries.

Besides, controls also take place at the EU borders. EU legislation ([CELEX 32009R0669](#)) sets the types of [controls of the presence of hazardous substances on certain products coming from certain non-EU countries](#).

Further information

[Community Reference Laboratories for Residues of Pesticides](#)

[Food and Veterinary Office](#) (FVO)

[Method validation and quality control procedures for pesticide residues analysis in food and seed](#)

Last update on: January 2013. Please check the [Export Helpdesk](#) for updated information

How to export to the EU?

Check it at www.exporthelp.europa.eu

