



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 7/12/2004

GAIN Report Number: IT4012

Italy

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

FAQs about Pesticide MRLs

2004

Approved by:

Ann Murphy
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Alberto Menghini

Report Highlights:

This report responds to a questionnaire circulated by FAS Horticultural and Tropical Products Division in May 2004, and gives details on Maximum Residues Limits for pesticides in foodstuffs. It supplements EU reporting (E23045).

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Rome [IT1]
[IT]

The following report is the reply from FAS Rome to a questionnaire circulated by FAS Horticultural and Tropical Products Division in May 2004 about Maximum Residues Limits of pesticides in foodstuff.

1. Which government agencies are involved in MRL establishment and what are their responsibilities?

A. Most MRLs are set at EU level. The Directorate General for public veterinary, food and nutrition health of the Italian Ministero della Salute (Ministry of Health) implements and integrates them at country level.

MOH is also assisted by the national Istituto Superiore di Sanita' (Superior Institute of Health) in a number of technical- scientific tasks, including the revision of laboratory analysis.

Monitoring on imports is done through border inspection services and their health units. They report to MOH.

Monitoring on national production and commerce is carried out by local health units that are under the control of local city councils. They report to MOH.

MOH also coordinates a unit of Carabinieri (military police) called Nucleo Anti Sostituzioni e Sanita' or N.A.S. (Anti-adulteration Unit). They conduct police investigations on MRLs and other foodstuff offences through their local sub-units.

2. What laws and regulations guide the development and enforcement of MRLs for pesticides?

The reference law is the Decree of Minister of Health of May, 19 2000 (Decreto del Ministro della sanità del 19 maggio 2000), establishing MRLs for foodstuff for human consumption. It implements EU Directives 97/41/CE and 1999/65/CE and 1999/71/CE. The Decree has been updated fourteen times thereafter, the last one in February 19, 2004. It includes MRLs that are set by implementation of EU Directives as well as those that are set at country level.

A consolidated text of the Italian law with all the annexes and the updates on MRLs is available (in Italian) at:

<http://www.ministerosalute.it/alimenti/sicurezza/sicApprofondimento.jsp?lang=italiano&label=pro&id=167>

Annex I is about products' classification, having regard of EU, Codex and pre-existing national classification.

Annex II reports MRLs in foodstuff of non-animal origin for human consumption. MRLs that are set at EU level are highlighted and therefore clearly identifiable from those that are set at country level.

About 198 MRLs are already harmonized with the EU while 752 are not yet.

The same Decree of Minister of Health (of May, 19 2000) defines rules for enforcement of MRLs and controls. Controls are carried on by local health units and Carabinieri at distribution level or, in some cases, by border inspection services. Ministry of agriculture may in some cases monitor imports through the Ispettorato Centrale Repressione Frodi (Central Inspectorate for Frauds Repression) in order to detect commercial frauds and/or illegal imports of goods.

A new consolidated text on MRLs is expected in July 2004.

3. What is the process for the establishment of MRLs?

Those that are established at EU level by Directive 91/414/CEE and later modifications. The Directive was adopted at country level with Decreto Legislativo March 17, 1995 number 194 and updated thereafter.

Companies apply for authorization of products to MOH providing detailed information on uses, toxicology, environmental impact, etc. MRLs are proposed by the company when presenting the documentation. MOH may accept or reject them on the basis of a risk assessment process.

4. How frequently is the printed copy or website listing of MRLs updated?

MOH makes available an online database of authorized products. It is in Italian and it is constantly updated:

<http://www.ministerosalute.it/alimenti/sicurezza/fitosanitari/ricerca.jsp>

MRLs are fed into the consolidated Italian text as they are approved. A new comprehensive text is expected in July 2004.

5. Is there a defined regulatory process for the establishment of import MRLs?

See EU rules referenced at the end of this report.

6. What residues of pesticides define the MRL? That is, is only the parent chemical measured or are specific metabolites included?

Specific metabolites are included

7. Are MRLs established for crop groups, individual crops or both?

Both

8. Does your country have a routine surveillance/testing program for pesticide residues in imported foods? If so, please describe it, i.e., number of samples tested, how priorities are identified, are results made available, sampling and testing procedures, etc.

Surveillance/testing programs are done in accordance with EU Directive 89/397/CEE, which is implemented at country level with Decreto Legislativo of March 3, 1993 number 123.

MOH coordinates the monitoring program and prescribes the minimum number of samples to be analyzed by its regional and local units. The minimum number of samples required in 2001 was 4,370 but the number of analysis done that year was more than the double of it.

Results of the tests conducted by field offices of MOH are transmitted electronically to a central office, they are also made available to the public at a later date. Data for the year are to be sent to MOH by March 31 of the following year in order to send them to EU Commission.

9. Does your country accept Codex MRLs? If not, do Codex MRLs play any role?

Italy accepts Codex MRLs as they are for very few products. Codex is taken into consideration for product classification and, where no country or EU MRLs are available, for deciding whether to allow or reject imports of products from third countries.

10. What actions are taken when residues are found above the MRL?

Depending on the seriousness of the offense, there could also be legal persecution. As far as imports are concerned, if they come from other EU member states they could be accepted if the shipment complies with MRLs in the country of origin. In some cases a conciliatory process between countries is activated at EU level.

In case of shipments from non-EU countries there could be a similar conciliatory process between countries on the basis of Codex MRLs or rejection of the shipments.

11. Are there default pesticide enforcement levels? What are they?

For those products that are not cultivated in Italy, if an EU MRL does not exist, the default MRL is 0.01 mg/Kg.

Government Contacts:

EU law and updates:

<http://europa.eu.int.scadplus/leg/it/lvbl13007c.htm>

Italian contacts:

Ministero della Salute

Direzione generale della sanita' veterinaria e degli alimenti

Palazzo Italia

Piazzale Marconi, 25

00144 EUR – Rome

Italy

Dr. Roberti

T. +39 06 5994 6194

f.roberti@sanita.it