



Foreign Agricultural Service

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BENELUX

Fresh Deciduous Fruit -

Chemical Residues on Dutch and Belgian Pears

1999

Approved by:

Philip A. Letarte
U.S. Embassy Brussels

Drafted by:

Marie-France Rogge/Chris Langezaal

Report Highlights:

Unacceptably high concentrations of chemical residues, namely chlorethane, have been discovered in Belgian and Dutch pears. Belgian and Dutch authorities are taking protective measures.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels [BE1], BE

In the last week of January 1999, the British supermarket chain Tesco discontinued selling imported Dutch and Belgian pears when they discovered unacceptably high concentrations of the growth retardant chlorethane (CCC). The EU allows the use of CCC with a maximum residue level (mrl) of 3 parts per million (ppm) whereas Tesco found levels of 15 to 20 ppm. U.K. pear growers are not allowed to use CCC in pear growing.

The largest Dutch auctions halted trading in pears for a couple of days in the last week of January. In order to guarantee compliance with the EU mrl requirement, on January 30, 1999, the Dutch government and the Dutch fruit auctions signed a protocol whereby the auctions guaranteed to sell only pears with a mrl of 3 ppm CCC. Dutch and Belgian pear trading has been resumed, according to the Greenery, the largest auction organization in the Netherlands.

The Belgian government has taken similar measures. Fruit auctions and NUBELT (National Union of Belgian Exporters of Agricultural and Horticultural Products) are providing the same guarantees to pear buyers.

Imported pears are subject to a phytosanitary and quality control by the Belgian and Dutch Plant Protection Services. Residue levels on pears are randomly checked by the Ministry of Public Health in all trade channels. These measures apply to imported pears as well, but not to pears in transit.

The large scale testing of all pears coming out of storage has increased prices as the normal flow of pears is slowed down. On February 2, 1999, the best quality Conference pear sold at the auction for DFL 2.00 per kilo (US\$ 0.47/lb) which was FL 0.50 (US\$0.12/lb) higher than on January 21, 1999.