Pesticide Residues –
The right to know, the need to reduce

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EU-Drinking Water Limit:   0,1 µg/l (Sum: 0,5 µg/l)
(Directive 98/83/EC)

100 g of some pesticides can contaminate up to 1 billion litres of water!


Other EU-countries: Data limited and not collated centrally

European Commission:
About pesticides issues:
„Gaps in the current data on the issue make it difficult to be precise about the scale and trends of the problem but there is sufficient evidence to suggest it is serious and growing.”

[Commission Communication on the Sixth Environmental Action Programme, 2001]
Pesticide residues on fresh food products of plant origin in the EU and in EFTA-States, 2002

58% (no detectable residues)
37% (below or at MRL)
5% (above MRL)

Source: Annual EU-wide Pesticide Residues Monitoring Report, EC, 2002

MRL: Maximum Residue Level; the maximum concentration (in mg/kg) of a pesticide legally permitted in or on food commodities or animal feed.

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- 58% (no detectable residues)
- 37% (below or at MRL)
- 5% (above MRL)

Multiple Pesticide Residues in Food (% samples of total samples, EC 2002)

- 5% samples with pesticide residues
- 15% samples with multiple residues

National Monitoring Results 1998 - 2002 for fruit, vegetables and cereals (EC, 2002)

- Samples with pesticide residues
- Samples with multiple residues

EU co-ordinated monitoring programme (2002):

".. for the assessment of acute exposure, the data show that the acute RfD* was exceeded in a number of cases and health risk cannot be excluded, in particular for vulnerable groups."

* acute Reference Dose (RfD) is the estimate of the amount of a substance in food, expressed on a body-weight basis, that can be ingested over a short period of time, usually during one meal or one day, without appreciable health risk to the consumer. Therefore reduces the acute toxicity. At present, acute Reference Doses have been fixed for a limited number of pesticides.

Pesticide Residue Monitoring Results of the Czech Republic for 2004


- Number of different pesticides sought: 119
- Number of different pesticides found: 64
- Number of samples analysed: 723

EU/EFTA (2002)

- Number of different pesticides sought: 170
- Number of different pesticides found: 74
- Number of samples analysed: 722 - 8095*

*Excluding Lichtenstein, Luxemburg

[Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority (CAFIA): http://www.szpi.gov.cz/eng/about/article.asp?id=57821&cat=2209&ts=6ec41]
Monitoring of Pesticide Residues in Products of Plant Origin

Multiple Pesticide Residues in Food (% samples of total samples, EC 2002)

MRL-Regulation (396/2005/EC)

(34): „To ensure that consumers are kept adequately informed, Member States should..... publish the results of national monitoring residues annually on the Internet, providing all individual data, including the place of collection and the names of retailers, traders and/or producers“.

(5): „....MRLs should be set at the lowest achievable level consistent with good agricultural practice for each pesticide with a view to protecting vulnerable groups such as children and the unborn“.

Conclusions:

- According to the precautionary principle, consumers should be protected against pesticide residues in total food and exposure from other environmental sources.
- Pesticide Use Reduction Initiatives are needed.
- The pesticide monitoring systems have to be improved throughout Europe in order to identify hot spots, lacks of risk assessment and risk management, and to set indicators and targets for Pesticide Use Reduction Programmes.
- Monitoring results as well as all documents regarding evaluation and decision-making processes have to be published completely and timely, because transparency is one fundamental precondition of an effective public participation.
Thank’s for your attention