

## Only rarely are unacceptably high levels of pesticide residues found in food

Foods produced in Germany and in the EU rarely contain too high a level of pesticide residues. In 2016, 1.7% (Germany) and 1.6% (other EU countries) of the investigated products were found to exceed MRLs. Although the rate rose slightly compared to the previous year, it confirms the low level of overruns that has been in place for years. This emerges from the "National Report on Pesticide Residues in Food 2016" published by the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL).

The study results of the federal states show that for frequently eaten foods such as apples, carrots, potatoes and popular seasonal products such as strawberries or asparagus, there have been little or no MRLs for years. In contrast, beans and fresh herbs regularly appear in the list of cultures with the highest number of exceedances (at least 100 samples) - as was the case in 2016. However, the rate for beans (with pods) has significantly decreased (2015: 7.6%, 2016 : 2.2%), this remained at a high level of 5.6% for fresh herbs (2015: 6.0%). Negative front runners in 2016 are wild mushrooms (12.4%) and currants (9.5%).

Frozen redcurrants were subject to increased controls as part of project monitoring in 2016 to identify differences in the impact of fresh fruit on frozen food. The challenged samples of currants were mainly frozen foods. Wild Mushrooms were also increasingly tested (on pesticides and trace elements) in 2016. Particularly noteworthy here were increased levels of mercury, which originate from the environment.

The most notable foods in 2016 came from the group Mukunuwenna (*Alternanthera sessilis*) and water spinach (*Ipomea aquatica*) from Sri Lanka and Thailand, respectively, with an overflow rate of 56.5% (23 samples, of which 13 had exceedances). Overall, both are rather niche products. Both are amphibious plants, which are consumed mainly in the Asian and African cuisine both as leafy vegetables or lettuce, and they are used for medical purposes.

In 54 out of 135 food groups (containing at least 10 samples), MRL exceedances were not observed in any of the samples analyzed.

The MRL is the amount of pesticide residues that should not be exceeded if used properly. Exceeding a maximum residue level does not mean a health risk to consumers.

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