



Company update - Pesticide Residue Management in products sold under our brands.

The latest press reports on this subject

Bonita Europe is aware of recent retail and consumer groups concerns regarding the use of plant protections products in the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. We welcome the level of interest in this important subject but are concerned that the issue is poorly understood by many consumers and does not fully represent the work of companies, such as ours, who work diligently to produce safe and healthy food. For this reason we felt it important to summarise our system re policy, record - keeping, traceability and residue testing throughout our supply chain.

Our rules – in the farms

In order to balance the requirements of maintaining a healthy plant by protecting it from excessive invasion from pests and diseases we aim always to apply the minimum of PPP's (Plant Protection Products). Our aim is to develop plant husbandry to a level where no non-organic products will have to be used in farms supplying Bonita or other brands we market. See Environmental Policy for more details. All Bonita accredited farms work to an Approved Pesticide List ⁽¹⁾. Adherence to this list and the maximum doses per application are regularly audited by our Quality Control department and are subject to periodic external audit.

EU rules

In Europe, food handlers must ensure that their products comply with the EU regulations set for pesticides (for more info, see web-site Freshfel ⁽²⁾). Maximum Residues Levels (MRLs) are set based on an actual assessment of residues found in

(1) See our Approved Pesticide List on our website.

(2) Freshfel Europe : European Fresh Produce Association, www.freshfel.org and www.freshquality.org.

field trials based on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and by applying the minimisation or so-called ALARA principle (As Low As Reasonably Achievable). MRLs are always based on agricultural use patterns and are set in a manner to ensure that the resulting exposure is much lower than the ADI and the ARfD values in order to avoid any unacceptable risk of acute or chronic toxicity ⁽³⁾. In view of the stringent authorisation procedure for plant protection products and the conservative approach to MRL setting, we concur with the European Unions assessment that residues at or below the established MRLs do not cause any harm to human health.

Our rules – weekly testing

Through the ‘Untersuchungsring’ in Hamburg and with targeted tests in Belgium, our Company has tested on a voluntary basis for levels of residual chemicals in the flesh and skin of our products. Since 2002, we are doing tests on a regularly and intensive basis. For this purpose we use the Beltest accredited laboratory Fytolab ⁽⁴⁾, one of the leading laboratories for UE proficiency and inter comparison testing. Accreditation implies compliance with EN-ISO17025 “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories”, which means that the laboratory also complies with ISO 9001 / ISO 9002.

Each sample sent by Bonita Europe to Fytolab is tested through an, at random, GCMS, LCMS, BIM, Etephon or CS2 screening ⁽⁵⁾. This way, not only all products from our approved pesticide list are covered but also a wide range of other products.

On weekly basis, several samples are sent to the laboratory. At least once a year all our suppliers are tested. Critical fruit, by which we define those plants grown closer to the ground or in the ground are tested more regularly.

To date, all weekly tests proved that our fruit is safe as defined by EU legislation.

The Company tracks banana and other fruit sales using a GS1 traceability system. This brings us in compliance with the General Food Law (178/2002/EC) which requires a step forward – step backward traceability on all products in the food and feed trade. The traceability system is integrated into our recall and crisis management procedure.

(3) ADI : Acceptable Daily Intake, ARfD : Acute Reference Dose, more info can be found on the schematic overview

(4) www.fytolab.be

(5) BIM : Multiresidue method for the determination of imidazoles in fruit and vegetables

GCMS : Multiresidue method identifying about 230 pesticides in different matrices

LMS : Multiresidue method by LC-MSMS for the quantification of pesticides in fruit and vegetables

CS2 : Multiresidue method for the determination of dithiocarbamates in fruit and vegetables

The future

We are amongst others also active members of the “Joint Food Chain Roundtable on Pesticides”, a group consisting of a wide range of operators in the food chain that are strongly committed to promoting sustainable agriculture. Providing our customers a high qualitative and safe food has always been and will remain our goal.

Legislation in the area of chemical usage and testing is constantly changing and these amendments are constantly monitored by our Quality Assurance departments in Europe and Ecuador to ensure our systems comply with the latest rules and regulations.