



# Association For Consumer Rights (Malta)

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## Association for Consumer Rights Malta Resolution for AGM 2023

### Resolution Title: Promoting a more comprehensive and transparent surveillance system of pesticide residues in food sold in Malta.

As in many other parts of the world, the use of pesticides in Malta is steadily on the rise. Farmers feel increasingly compelled to use more pesticides mainly because increasing population pushes for more intensive farming, global warming favours more pest proliferation, and increasingly pesticide-resistant pests are emerging ironically through pesticide use.

While prudent use of pesticides is warranted to protect plants in certain circumstances within strict use parameters, most pesticides carry public health risks. Therefore, Malta is obliged to regulate and surveil pesticide residues in food sold in Malta and ensure that such foods do not have pesticide residues above the Maximum Residual Level (MRL) set by EC Regulation No. 396/2005.

**Table 1: The Main Data about Pesticide Residue Testing in Foods sold in Malta undertaken by MCCA**

2020		2021		2022	
19 Commodities Sampled	Samples taken	18 Commodities Sampled	Samples taken	20 Commodities Sampled	Samples taken
Beans	14	Table grapes	12	Apples	12
Brown Rice	12	Bananas	12	Strawberries	12
Infant & follow-on formulae	10	Grapefruit	7	Peaches inc. Nectarines	12
Bovine Liver	13	Aubergines	4	Wine (red or white)	12
Cabbage heads	13	Broccoli	11	Lettuces	12
Cauliflowers	12	Melons	8	Head Cabbage	12
Carrots	13	Cultivated Fungi	8	Tomatoes	12
Grapes	12	Bell peppers	12	Spinach	12
Kiwi Fruits	12	Wheat grain	7	Oat grain	12
Melons	12	Virgin olive oil	12	Barley Grain	12
Onions	12	Bovine fat	12	Food for infants and young children	10
Oranges	12	Chicken eggs	12	Cow Milk	12
Pears	12	Processed cereal-based baby food	10	Swine fat	13
Potatoes	12	Strawberries	1	Table Grapes	2
Poultry Fat	9	Tomatoes	1	Melon	2
Rye Grain/Flour	5	Oranges	2	Carrots	2
Spinach	12	Carrots	2	Potatoes	2
Strawberries	12	Potatoes	3	Bell Peppers	2
Tomatoes	12			Cultivated fungi	2
<b>Total Samples</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>Total Samples</b>	<b>136</b>	Chickens Eggs	2
				<b>Total Samples</b>	<b>169</b>

Sources: 2020 data from National Summary Report on Pesticide Residues, published by EFSA 2021 and 2022 data provided by MCCA

The surveillance, monitoring and public dissemination of pesticide residue test results carried out in Malta are deemed not to be adequate to provide adequate consumer protection. The above table illustrates the three main shortcomings in Malta's current pesticide residue testing regime:

1. The food items tested in a year is too low – only a maximum of twenty food items are being tested in a year.
2. The number of samples taken in a year for most food items tested is very low. For example, in all of 2022, only two samples of chicken eggs, carrots, potatoes, peppers or fungi samples were tested; The maximum number of samples tends to be twelve or thirteen – one sample a month, which is still too low to really have a reliable sample of what is being sold nationwide;
3. Results are not disseminated to the public in a prompt timely manner, as the results test undertaken in a year are issued all together about a year and three months later – only after EFSA has issued them;

To ensure that Malta's pesticide residue testing regime gives consumers the needed protection, ACR aims to particularly work so that:

- A. A more comprehensive and representative number of food commodities be sampled in Malta per year.
- B. More samples be taken of each commodity surveilled every year, especially for commodities that in recent years have been found to have pesticide residues above the maximum residue level permitted by EC regulations ( In line with EC recommendation for risk-based sampling).
- C. Test results and details be uploaded on MCCA website and made available to the public as soon as test results are received by authorities. To date, test results are being made public over a year after results are received.
- D. To lobby Maltese MEPs to ask for EC requirement that food labels include what pesticides or antibiotics the food item was treated with.
- E. Continue disseminating information on pesticide residues in food sold in Malta.

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