

HOW EUROPE MONITORS PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN FOOD

Why are pesticides used?

To **protect crops** from being damaged or destroyed by disease and pests.

To **maintain crop yields**.



What are pesticide residues and how do they get into food?

These residues are the measurable **amounts of chemicals** resulting from the use of pesticides that **remain on cereals, fruit and vegetables** after harvesting.

Pesticides residues present on crops used to feed animals and in the environment can be found in **foods of animal origin** such as meat, milk and eggs.



Making sure pesticide levels in food are safe

EFSA provides independent risk assessments to evaluate how pesticides can be used safely.

At EU level, pesticide use is limited to the **minimum quantity** that allows them to carry out their job effectively while ensuring food is safe to eat.



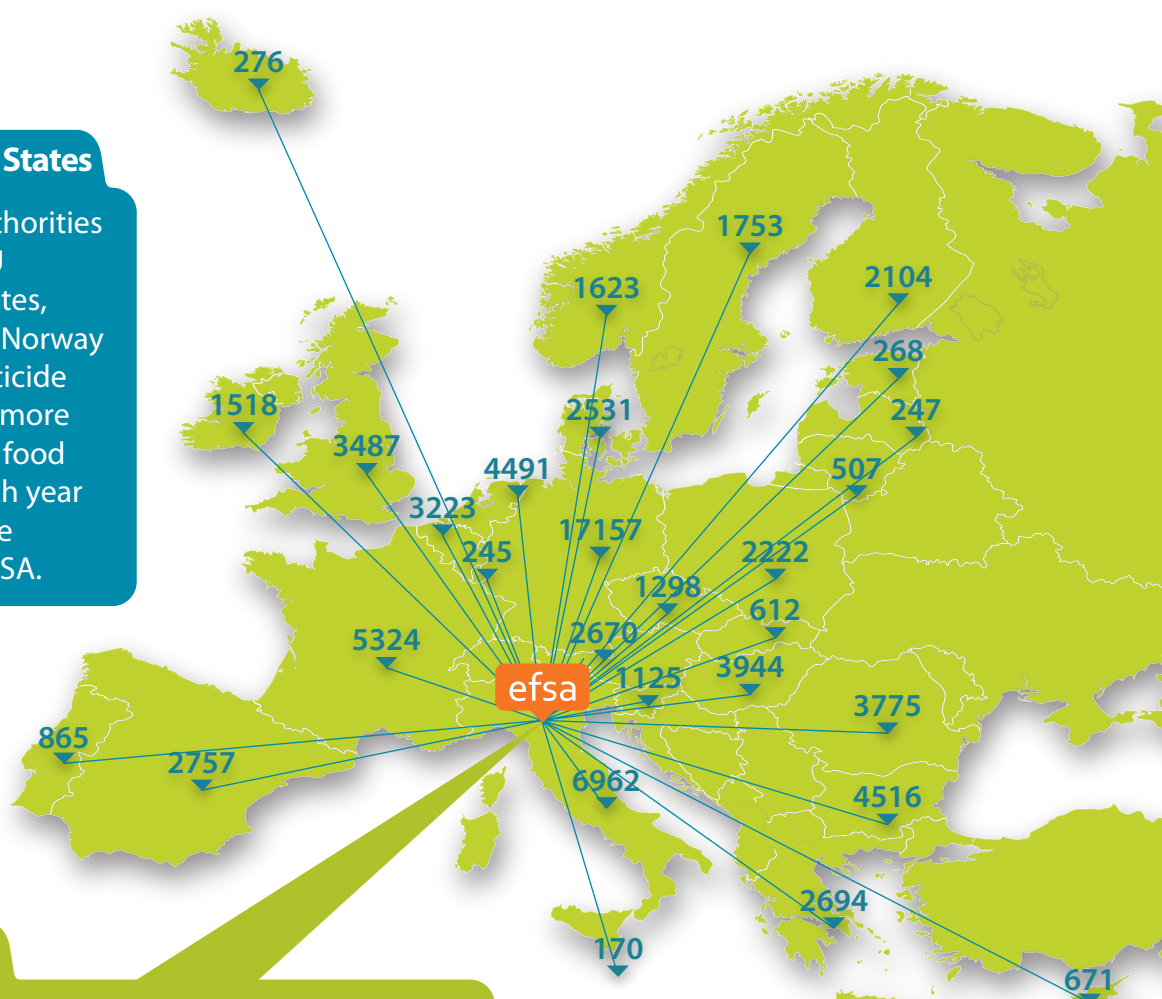
Based on EFSA's advice, the European Commission and Member States **approve pesticides** and **set legal limits** for pesticide residues on foods - known as **maximum residue levels (MRLs)**.



Europe-wide cooperation to monitor pesticide residues

1 Member States

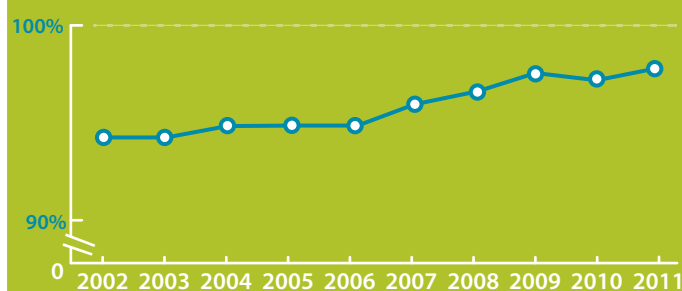
National authorities from the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway analyse pesticide residues on more than 75,000 food samples each year and send the results to EFSA.



Number of samples analysed in 2011

2 EFSA

EFSA analyses the data and publishes a report annually detailing the percentage of samples containing residue levels within legal limits. The report also assesses the exposure of European consumers to pesticide residues through their diets. EU decision-makers use these data as a basis for future actions such as monitoring activities, pesticide authorisations and MRL setting.



Percentage of samples within legal limits

3 Authorised pesticides

An ongoing review has led to the removal from the EU market of a large number of pesticides that failed to meet current safety standards.



Number of authorised pesticides

Future developments

As part of its ongoing mission to advance risk assessment, EFSA has started using an innovative approach to dietary exposure known as cumulative risk assessment. This approach considers risks arising from the exposure to more than one pesticide. Cumulative effects will only occur when chemicals with similar toxicological properties present on food are consumed together.

