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Proposed Maximum Residue Limit

PMRL2020-39

Ethephon

(publié aussi en français)

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Under the authority of the [Pest Control Products Act](#), Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) granted continued registration of products containing ethephon for sale and use in Canada. The food use on apple trees when fruit are present was recommended for cancellation.

Before registering a pesticide for food use in Canada or allowing continued registration, the PMRA must determine the quantity of residues that are likely to remain in or on the food when the pesticide is used according to label directions and that such residues will not be a concern to human health. This quantity is then legally specified as a maximum residue limit (MRL). An MRL applies to the identified raw agricultural food commodity as well as to any processed food product that contains it, except where separate MRLs are specified for the raw agricultural commodity and a processed product made from it.

The dietary assessment for ethephon was published in the PRVD2018-01. Based on the comments received through the consultation process, the dietary risk assessment was revised. In the final re-evaluation decision for ethephon (RVD2020-09), human health risks were identified for apple trees when fruit are present, imported apples and apple juice, and imported citrus fruits. Therefore, MRLs for ethephon on these treated food commodities are proposed for revocation.

Following the revocation of these MRLs, these crops will be regulated under subsection B.15.002(1) of the Food and Drug Regulations, which requires that residues not exceed 0.1 ppm. Consultation on the revocation of MRLs for ethephon is being conducted via this document.

To comply with Canada's international trade obligations, consultation on the proposed MRL is also being conducted internationally by notifying the [World Trade Organization](#), as coordinated by [Canada's Notification Authority and Enquiry Point](#).

International situation and trade implications

To mitigate human health risks associated with all food uses, MRLs are proposed for revocation. Table 1 compares the MRLs to be revoked in Canada for ethephon with corresponding American tolerances and Codex MRLs.

American tolerances are listed in the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#), 40 CFR Part 180, by pesticide, and a listing of established Codex MRLs¹ is available on the Codex Alimentarius [Pesticide Index](#) webpage, by pesticide or commodity.

¹ The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an international organization under the auspices of the United Nations that develops international food standards, including MRLs.

Table 1 Comparison of Canadian MRLs, american tolerances and Codex MRLs (where different)

Food commodity	Canadian MRL (ppm)	American Tolerance (ppm)	Codex MRL (ppm)
Apple juice	Revoked 6 ppm MRL ¹	10.0 ppm	Not established
Apples	Revoked 3 ppm MRL ¹	5.0 ppm	0.8 ppm
Citrus fruits	Revoked 1 ppm MRL ¹	Not established	Not established

¹ Following the revocation of the MRLs, the food commodities will be regulated under subsection B.15.002(1) of the Food and Drug Regulations, which requires that residues not exceed 0.1 ppm.

Next steps

The PMRA invites the public to submit written comments on the proposed revocation of MRLs for ethephon up to 75 days from the date of publication of this document. Please forward your comments to Publications (see the contact information on the cover page of this document). The PMRA will consider all comments received before making a final decision on the revocation of MRLs. Comments received will be addressed in a separate document linked to this PMRL. The revocation of MRLs will be legally in effect as of the date that they are removed from the [Maximum Residue Limit Database](#). The revocation of MRLs will take effect to allow sufficient time for legally treated commodities to clear the channels of trade.