Based on the PDP data, consumers can feel confident about eating a diet that is rich in fresh fruits and vegetables.

www.ams.usda.gov/pdp
PDP Provides Reliable Data on the Safety of America’s Food Supply

The PDP provides reliable data that help assure consumers that the food they feed their families is safe. The pesticide data that USDA publishes each year provide regulators, scientists, registrants, farmers, processors, and consumers with important insights into the actual levels of pesticide residues found on widely consumed foods. EPA uses PDP data to conduct dietary risk assessments and to ensure that any pesticide residues in foods remain at safe levels.

The PDP annual summaries consistently show that 99 percent of sampled products had residues below EPA tolerances. The PDP data demonstrate that overall pesticide residues found on foods tested are at levels below the tolerances established by EPA and pose no safety concern. Based on the PDP data, consumers can feel confident about eating a diet that is rich in fresh fruits and vegetables.

PDP Evaluates a Wide Variety of Agricultural Products

PDP tests both fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, grains, dairy, meat, poultry, and other specialty food items such as honey, corn syrup, infant formula, fish, and nuts for pesticide residues. Organic fruit and vegetables are a part of this testing. Each year, USDA and EPA work together to identify foods to be tested on a rotating basis. PDP coordinates with EPA to determine which samples should be collected and tested to meet EPA data needs. PDP collects data to provide a statistical representation of pesticide residues present in the food supply. PDP is not designed for enforcement of EPA pesticide residue tolerances.

Established in 1991, PDP is an Important Part of the U.S. Food Safety System

The Pesticide Data Program was established in 1991, as part of a food safety initiative. The EPA uses the PDP data when looking at dietary pesticide exposure, a critical step to verify that all sources of exposure to pesticides meet U.S. safety standards. PDP concentrates its efforts in providing pesticide residue data on foods most consumed by children. This PDP policy is guided by the requirements of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act and by recommendations made in 1993 by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in “Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children.”

PDP informs the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) if residues detected exceed the EPA tolerance or have no EPA tolerance established. PDP residue results are reported to FDA and EPA through monthly reports. In instances where a PDP finding is extraordinary and may pose a safety risk, FDA and EPA are immediately notified.

PDP Samples are Analyzed by Accredited Laboratories

All PDP laboratories have achieved ISO 17025 accreditation and are equipped with instrumentation capable of detecting residues at very low levels. The PDP testing methods detect the smallest possible levels of pesticide residues, including levels below the tolerances set by the EPA. Laboratory chemists receive intensive training and must demonstrate proficiency on an ongoing basis. Approximately 450 pesticides and their breakdown products are analyzed using methods capable of detecting hundreds of pesticides in a single test. Occasionally, at EPA's request, single analyte residue methods are used to test for specific pesticides of concern. Approximately 10,000 samples are collected and tested each year.

The PDP data are available on the AMS website or by contacting MPD.

CONTACT INFORMATION

USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
Science and Technology Programs
Monitoring Programs Division
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 0611 South, Stop 0276
Washington DC 20250

Phone: 202-572-8177
Email: amsmpo.data@ams.usda.gov