

Practical Challenges of Meeting EU MRL Requirements: A Farmer's Perspective

PROGRESS regional training webinar

**“Strengthening the capacity of fruit and berry producers in the
Eastern Partnership (EaP) to access the EU market”**

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MRLs: What They Are and Why They Matter Critically.

MRL (Maximum Residue Limits) – the maximum legal level of pesticide residues.

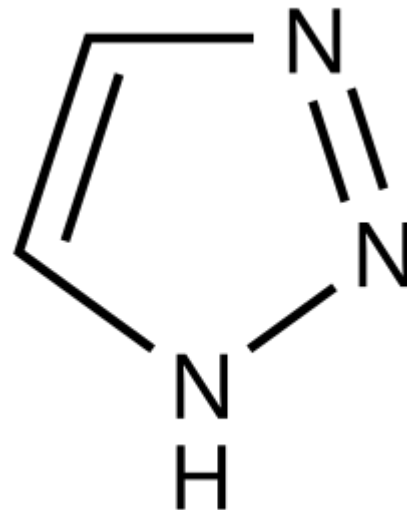
Ukraine's reality:

15% of fruit exports to the EU rejected due to MRL violations

~\$12M in annual industry losses

50+ EU-banned substances still legal in Ukraine

The cost: batch rejections, fines, sanctions, reputational damage, and future supply restrictions.



Major MRL Challenges Facing Ukrainian Farmers

Differences between Ukrainian and EU regulations.

Frequent changes to MRLs in the EU.

Limited number of permitted pesticides.

Unpredictable weather conditions.

High cost of laboratory testing.

Risk of consignment rejection due to exceeding even a single residue limit.

LACK OF INFORMATION ON MRLs

A farmer needs to know:
how to put together an export crop plan;
what pre-harvest tests are needed;
how to tailor their product to the buyer's standards.



Practical training, advisory services, and knowledge sharing are essential components for the successful integration of Ukrainian horticulture into the European market. A trained producer can properly plan cultivation practices and reduce the risks of losing export consignments.

IMPACT OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

Excessive rainfall and high humidity during the growing season promote the development of diseases, which necessitates an increase in the number of pesticide applications.

The flowering period, fruit formation, and the pre-harvest stage are particularly critical



WEATHER RISKS

In modern horticulture, weather risks have become one of the factors that must be taken into account when planning exports. This is especially true for spring frosts and hail.

After frosts, the plant experiences physiological stress, fruit development and ripening times change. The farmer may be forced to adjust the protection system, which requires additional control.

Mechanical damage to fruits due to hail opens the way for infections, so there is often a need for rapid application of fungicides.

Hail and frost do not change the MRL requirements, but they do change the farmer's decisions, which can affect the compliance of the product.



ROLE OF LABORATORY RESEARCH

Planning of pre-harvest analyses
Control of risky active substances
Working with accredited laboratories
Checking each export batch



*The laboratory should serve as an instrument of risk management,
rather than an instrument of punishment.*

CONCLUSIONS

MRL compliance is a comprehensive process that begins long before export. A farmer must take into account not only the choice of pesticides but also weather risks, seasonal characteristics, and the requirements of the specific target market. In the context of climate change and increasingly stringent buyer demands, knowledge, producer training, and laboratory testing play a pivotal role. Ukrainian fruit holds great potential, but stable exports are only possible when product safety is built into the crop right from the orchard.

