

## UNDERSTANDING:

# Chemical Usage for Export Markets




VegExportNotes are designed by AUSVEG specifically for levy-paying vegetable growers to enhance industry trade knowledge. The content provided in VegExportNotes is based on the best available information at the time of publishing.

### What are Maximum Residue Limits?

Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) are the maximum levels of chemical residue allowed in a food product. Domestic standards are set by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ); however, MRLs vary across each international market.

### Why are they important?

MRLs have been established to ensure food is safe for human consumption and to encourage good agri-chemical use on farms. It is a requirement for export that you comply with the MRLs set by the destination country.

Prior to export you must be aware of and comply with the MRLs specific to your export market as a condition of market access. Non-compliance may result in financial penalties and/or destruction or reshipping of your product at your cost.

### CODEX

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) is the international food standards setting body recognised by the World Trade Agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) as being the reference point for food standards applied in international trade, with the objectives of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

CODEX identifies acceptable chemical residue limits for a range of agri-chemicals. However, some countries do set their own MRL requirements, which can differ from CODEX. You must use the MRLs set by the importing country.

### What you need to consider:

- Growers are responsible for ensuring chemicals are used in accordance with Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) and to minimise any unacceptable chemical residue levels.
- Consider the label instructions:
  - Maximum label rate
  - Label frequency of application
  - Specific label statements
- Remember chemical residues can remain in a crop and/or the produce for an extended period of time following application.
- Know your market:
  - know the standards used in your target market and what tests you must perform
  - recognise that markets may update or make changes to their accepted MRL levels
- Think ahead. Consider which markets your produce may enter at the time of production.

### Resources available:

AUSVEG has access to the GlobalMRL database for a number of key markets and vegetable commodities. Due to the everchanging nature of international MRLs, published lists provided limited benefit and can be quickly out of date. This resource is available for levy-paying growers via AUSVEG for any ad-hoc real-time MRL data requests.

Please do not hesitate to contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0722 or at [export@ausveg.com.au](mailto:export@ausveg.com.au) with your MRL concerns.