



**Press release from AIJN, the European Fruit Juice Association, on the presence of Carbendazim residues in Orange Juice**

Reports appeared today in the European press referring to the detection by the US Food and Drug Administration of traces of *Carbendazim*, a fungicide, in orange juice concentrate from Brazil. Fears that the US might ban imports of orange juice from Brazil drove the orange juice futures to an all-time high.

In the European legislation of plant protection products, a difference is made between the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) and the specific authorization of use of the different plant protection products. In the EU, as in the US *Carbendazim* may not be used as a fungicide on oranges. Legally allowed for use in the EU is *Thiophanate methyl*, a pesticide which also leaves residues of carbendazim.

However residues may occur in orange because of the degradation of Thiophanate methyl and because of the allowed use of this pesticide outside the EU such as in Brazil. *Carbendazim* is used in Brazilian orange production to fight "Black spot", a type of mould that grows on orange trees. The Maximum Residue Level (MRL) set for *Carbendazim* in orange in the EU is 200 ppb.

The residue levels of *Carbendazim* found in Brazilian orange juice concentrate in the US were at very low levels i.e. 10 ppb, which is well within recognized safety levels. The US Environmental Protection Agency, upon request from the Food and Drug Administration, conducted a preliminary risk assessment and concluded that "consumption of orange juice with *Carbendazim* at the low levels reported does not raise safety concerns".

In the EU there are ongoing screening programs in Member states to ensure that pesticides MRLs are adhered to. If a product is identified with a problem then there will be a rapid alert to all states to highlight this issue. For materials coming into the community there are provisions for products to be screened at the point of entry. So far no problems have been reported in relation to *Carbendazim*.

Additionally to the official controls the European fruit juice industry, through its European Quality Control System, has put in place since many years its own screening program. This ensures that the raw materials (fruit juice concentrates and purées) used by the industry as well as the packed fruit juices sold to the consumers comply with national and European hygiene and safety regulations and thus are safe to consume. Again until today no problems have been reported as to the presence of *Carbendazim* in orange juices.

European consumers can thus continue to enjoy drinking orange juices in the knowledge that a glass of juice contributes to the 5 portions a day of fruit and vegetables we are all recommended to consume each day.

AIJN, the European Fruit Juice Association, has been the representative association of the fruit juice industry in the EU for over 50 years. The Association represents the industry from the fruit processors and blenders to the packers of the consumer products.

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