

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2057
ANSWERED ON 11/03/2025

LOW PESTICIDE LEVELS FOR RICE EXPORT

2057. THIRU ARUN NEHRU:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that European Union (EU) has updated its control list with unreasonable low pesticide levels (viz. EU limit - Aflatoxin B1: 2 µg/kg, India limit through FSSAI – 10 µg/kg, US limit - 20 µg/kg) for rice export from India, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether this has affected many rice producers from the States of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu who export non basmati rice, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether this has taken away the advantage Indian companies during the years and the sudden change in control limit has given unfair advantages to ASEAN countries who have taken the Indian producers position in EU, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of steps taken to level this unfair step;
- (e) whether many EU companies take advantage of the Indian market with liberal rules; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जितिन प्रसाद)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) The individual countries including European Union as a region, set their own Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides, based on the risk assessment carried out by them. In many cases, the MRLs set by EU, which are set on hazard-based approach, are lower (stricter) than the MRLs set by the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India).

Aflatoxin is a contaminant in food and feed and not a pesticide. The comparative level of MRLs of Aflatoxin set by EU and FSSAI is as under:

Contaminant	MRL (µg/kg), as on date		
	EU	US	FSSAI
Aflatoxin B1	2	20	10

(b) & (c) The EU MRLs apply to all exporting countries.

The MRL for Aflatoxin B1 for rice, has not been revised by the EU in the recent past. There have been a few detections of Aflatoxin (in form of Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) alerts) in rice consignments exported from India to the EU, however no detections have been reported for rice consignments exported by exporters of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, in the last 5 years.

As per trade data, the volume of Rice exports from India to the EU has increased by 111% between 2019 and 2023, while the volume of non-Basmati rice exports has increased by 500 %, during the same period, which is higher than the ASEAN countries.

The details of exports of Rice and non-Basmati Rice to the EU is as below:

Rice Exports to EU			
Exporting Country	Unit: Qty in "000" MT		Absolute Growth (%) during 2019-2023
	2019	2023	
India	124	262	111.29%
Thailand	246	209	-15.04%
Cambodia	179	253	41.34%
Vietnam	57	57	0%
Pakistan	344	386	12.21%
Myanmar	467	549	17.56%
Non-Basmati Rice Exports to EU			
Exporting Country	Unit: Qty in "000" MT		Absolute Growth (%) during 2019-2023
	2019	2023	
India	2	12	500%
Thailand	246	209	-15.04%
Cambodia	179	253	41.34%
Vietnam	57	57	0%
Pakistan	198	208	5.05%
Myanmar	467	549	17.56%

Source: ITC Trade Map

(d) to (f) India has been complying with the requirements of the importing countries, including that of the EU. However, in case where the MRLs/ML of pesticides and contaminants have been lowered significantly, India has taken up with the concerned country and also the European Union, through bilateral discussions. In the absence of resolution through bilateral discussions, Specific Trade Concerns (STC) are then raised at the World Trade Organisation(WTO).

Further, to ensure that the rice growers comply with the MRLs set by EU and other importing nations, State Agriculture departments and Agriculture Universities conduct capacity building and sensitization programmes of the growers to adopt good agricultural practices and to ensure judicious use of agro-chemicals.

As regards, entry of European Union (EU) Companies, trade and investment with all major trading partners is an ongoing process including exchange of business delegations and Business to Business (B2B) interactions.

Annexure referred to in reply to Part (a) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2057 for answer on 11.03.2025

A. List of frequently detected pesticide molecules exceeding the MRL set by EU in Rice consignments exported from India from 2015 to 2025

Pesticide Residue	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Tricyclazole	0	0	0	14	8	7	6	22	19	19	2	97
Thiamethoxam	0	0	0	1	6	2	6	12	15	15	3	60
Chlorpyrifos	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	6	5	1	18
Imidacloprid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	3	0	9
Carbendazim	7	1	0	7	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	20
Propiconazole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	5
Buprofezin	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Profenofos	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Thifluzamide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Imazalil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Acephate	1	1	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Methamidophos	1	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Triazophos	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Chlorpyrifos-methyl	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hexaconazole	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Source: EU RASFF Portal

Aflatoxin is a contaminant in food and feed, and not a pesticide

B. Comparative analysis of EU MRLs, Codex MRLs and FSSAI MRLs for frequently detected pesticide molecules in consignment of Rice exported from India

Sl. No.	Name of Pesticide Molecules	EU MRLs mg/kg		Codex mg/kg	FSSAI mg/kg
		Prior to Revision	Revised		
1.	Tricyclazole	1.00	0.01	-	3.0
2.	Thiamethoxam	0.01	0.01	3.0**	0.02
3.	Chlorpyrifos /Chlorpyriphos	0.50	0.01	-	0.5
4.	Imidacloprid	1.50	0.01	-	0.05
5.	Carbendazim	0.01	0.01	2.0*	2.0
6.	Propiconazole	1.50	0.01	-	0.05
7.	Buprofezin	0.50	0.01	-	0.05
8.	Profenofos	0.01	0.01	-	-
9.	Thifluzamide	-	-	-	0.05
10.	Imazalil	0.05	0.01	-	-
11.	Acephate	0.02	0.01	1.0 *	1.0
12.	Methamidophos	0.01	0.01	0.6 *	-
13.	Triazophos	0.02	0.02	0.6**	0.6
14.	Chlorpyriphos-methyl	3.00	0.01	-	-

* MRLs in husked rice ** MRLs in polished rice

Source: EU Pesticide database, CODEX & FSSAI
