

Global Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Contaminants Updates: November 2026

Released by the American Pecan Council

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A Quarterly Report Released by the American Pecan Council

A Practical Reference for Exporters, Shellers, Growers, Researchers,
and Stakeholders to Protect the Pecan Export Trade

At-A-Glance Updates

EU Updates:

Pesticides and Other Agricultural Products:

The EU is currently reviewing how it approves chemicals for use on farms in the EU, similar to how the EPA does in the US. While what matters most for American pecan producers and exporters is the EU's Maximum Residue Level (MRL) regulations, when the EU drops a chemical's approval for domestic farming use, it often cuts its MRLs afterward to the lowest level labs can measure. That change happens through a separate legal step and usually takes a year or more. However, that timeline could shorten: under the EU's proposed Food and Feed Omnibus, MRLs for certain EU-banned substances could be lowered to that level more quickly, so we are tracking its progress, along with other regulatory changes affecting chemicals used in pecan production.

Substances we're specifically watching for updates:

- **Thiophanate-methyl and carbendazim:** The pecan industry should watch thiophanate-methyl because it is sometimes used to treat pecan scab, and the scab fungus is becoming more resistant to available treatments. This chemical has come up in EU discussions, but exporters should note that thiophanate-methyl's MRL (along with carbendazim's; thiophanate-methyl breaks down into carbendazim in plants) was already lowered for pecans in an EU regulation this past summer: from 0.2 to 0.01 mg/kg for thiophanate-methyl and from 0.1 to 0.01 mg/kg for carbendazim. The new limits take effect on January 29, 2027.

- **Fludioxonil:** Also used to treat pecan scab. The EU has proposed not to renew fludioxonil's approval. This is an early-stage proposal that has not yet been voted on, so it could still change. If it goes through, expect the EU to review its MRL on pecans next, which could mean a much lower limit.

- **Flonicamid:** Used to treat yellow aphids in pecans. No change is expected: the EU has proposed extending its approval through 2029, and the proposal is headed for a vote.

- **Hexythiazox, pendimethalin, and ziram**: A European Commission committee will discuss extending their approval periods later this month. Hexythiazox is used to treat mites, pendimethalin is for weed management, and ziram is for scab. This isn't an immediate issue, but we will continue to monitor.

CONTAMINANTS & LABELING:

- **Nickel:** The EU still hasn't moved to change the maximum level for nickel in pecans from 3.5 mg/kg to 10 mg/kg. The relevant EU committee may take it up in November, but EU officials at the FRUCOM annual meeting in October said they could not commit to a timeline.

- **Acrylamide:** The European Commission is still preparing new measures on acrylamide, but these do not currently affect pecans.

- **MOAH:** Pecan exporters should be aware of a proposal to set a maximum level of 2 mg/kg for Mineral Oil Aromatic Hydrocarbons (MOAH) in tree nuts, with a proposed effective date of January 1, 2027. The EU also continues to monitor and investigate contamination from mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH).

- **PFAS:** The EU has discussed extending its PFAS ("forever chemicals") limits (which currently apply only to certain animal products) to plant-based foods, but there are no formal proposals yet. This is worth watching as the industry may not necessarily be able to control exposure; for example, PFAS-contaminated water can leave deposits in the soil.

- **COOL:** The EU requires country-of-origin labeling (COOL) for fruit and vegetables. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2429, the EU's marketing standards for fruit and vegetables, specifically names pecans. Under Article 5(1)(b), pecans are exempt from the marketing standards, except the requirement to state the country of origin.

Special note: The European Commission was asked whether shelling pecans outside of the country of origin would be considered a substantial enough processing step to change the country of origin. In a provisional opinion to FRUCOM, the Commission said shelling would NOT change the country of origin, as long as no further processing (e.g., roasting) is done. The Commission still needs to communicate this position to EU member states. Please alert APC if you face issues.

We've also heard from EU importers that EU countries are not consistent in the documentation they require to prove origin. Please keep APC posted on any issues so we can educate EU partners. The EU recently released a Q&A document to help clarify the situation.

Rest-of-World Updates

- **Japan:** The reduced trifloxystrobin MRL of 0.02 mg/kg takes effect on December 16, 2026. Alert APC to any compliance issues. The chlorpyrifos MRL expires in September 2027 and is expected to be revoked, with no replacement limit proposed.

APC depends on industry feedback and input to make these reports more valuable. While APC cannot lobby for changes, it can educate export markets about the essential elements of pecan production and processing.

Purpose of This Report

As pecans expand into new export markets, the industry must adapt to changing food regulations. In fact, numerous MRLs and contaminants are proposed, revised, and changed each year. This report summarizes the potential changes to MRLs for agricultural products and contaminant substances used in pecan production and processing across major export markets.

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Sources and Key Terms

This report draws on FoodChain ID, a global MRL and contaminant database, and on consultants APC hired to help navigate EU markets. Key terms used in this report:

- **Pending** means an MRL has been approved but has not yet taken effect.
- **Proposed** means a new or revised MRL has been put forward in a proposal, draft amendment, or petition and is still moving through the regulatory process. It may change or be withdrawn before it becomes final.
- **Pending Revocation** means a proposal, amendment, or petition to revoke an MRL is moving through the regulatory process. It may change or be withdrawn.

This report covers contaminant limits that may affect the pecan industry and are pending expiration, pending revision, or proposed:

- **Pending Expiration** means a current contaminant limit is nearing its expiration date.
- **Pending Revisions** means changes to a current contaminant limit are awaiting approval.
- **Proposed** means a limit has been proposed for a contaminant that has become a concern in a product.

Pending and Proposed MRLs by Country

The charts in this section provide a breakdown of pesticide MRLs that are currently being proposed or pending revision. Currently, the European Union and Japan have actively changing MRLs that may impact the pecan industry.

European Union

Market	Index Pesticide	Published Commodity Name	Index Commodity	MRL (ppm)	MRL Type	MRL State	MRL Effective Date
European Union	1,4-Dimethylnaphthalene	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.05	General	Current	Feb 22, 2023
	1,4-Dimethylnaphthalene	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.03	General	Pending	Jan 06, 2027
	Benomyl	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.1	General	Current	Oct 10, 2010
	Benomyl	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.01	General	Pending	Jan 29, 2027
	Carbendazim	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.1	General	Current	Jan 01, 2012
	Carbendazim	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.01	General	Pending	Jan 29, 2027
	Difenoconazole	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.05	General	Current	June 26, 2018
	Difenoconazole	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.03	General	Pending	May 5, 2027
	Metribuzin	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.1	General	Current	Sep 01, 2008
	Metribuzin	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.01	General	Pending	Jan 06, 2027
	Metribuzin-desamino-diketo (Metribuzin-DADK)		Nut, pecan	0.01	Default	Current	
	Metribuzin-desamino-diketo (Metribuzin-DADK)	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.01	General	Pending	Jan 06, 2027
	Thiophanate-methyl	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.2	General	Current	Jan 01, 2012
	Thiophanate-methyl	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.01	General	Pending	Jan 29, 2027
	1,4-Dimethylnaphthalene	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.05	General	Current	Feb 22, 2023
	1,4-Dimethylnaphthalene	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.03	General	Pending	Jan 06, 2027
	Benomyl	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.1	General	Current	Oct 10, 2010

Japan

Market	Index Pesticide	Published Commodity Name	Index Commodity	MRL (ppm)	MRL Type	MRL State	MRL Effective Date
Japan	Chlorpyrifos	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.05	General	Current	May 13, 2022
	Chlorpyrifos	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.05	General	Expires/Revoked	September 10, 2027
	Spirodiclofen	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.1	General	Current	April 15, 2011
	Spirodiclofen	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.08	General	Pending	September 10, 2027
	Trifloxystrobin	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.04	General	Current	April 15, 2011
	Trifloxystrobin	Pecans	Nut, pecan	0.02	General	Pending	December 16, 2026

For reference, USDA's MRL Quick Reference Sheet for Pecans can be found here.

Pending and Proposed Contaminants by Country

The charts in this section break down contaminants that are proposed or pending revision. Currently, the European Union and South Africa have contaminants pending expiration, pending revision, and new proposals that may impact the pecan industry. Other countries have contaminant limits that currently remain in place with no significant implications for pecan production.

European Union

Market	European Union
Contaminant	Mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH)
Food Category	Nuts and seeds
Commodity	5.5.3 Tree nuts
Maximum Level (ppm)	2
State	Proposed
Regulation Effective Date	January 1, 2027
Regulatory Notes	Fruits, tree nuts, vegetables, cereals, oilseeds and spices as listed in the relevant category as defined in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC (OJ L 70,

	16.3.2005, p. 1). For the purpose of this Regulation tree nuts are not covered by the maximum level for fruits

Market	European Union
Contaminant	Nickel
Food Category	Nuts and seeds
Commodity	3.6.1.2 Chestnuts, pine nuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts and pecan nuts
Maximum Level (ppm)	10
State	Proposed
Regulation Effective Date	
Regulatory Notes	The maximum level applies to the edible part. The maximum level does not apply to tree nuts for crushing and oil refining, provided that the remaining pressed tree nuts are not placed on the market as food. In case the remaining pressed tree nuts are placed on the market as food, the maximum level applies, taking into account Article 3(1) and (2). Fruits, tree nuts, vegetables, cereals, oilseeds, herbs and spices as listed in the relevant category as defined in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC (OJ L 70, 16.3.2005, p. 1). Tree nuts are not covered by the maximum level for fruit.

Market	European Union
Contaminant	Nickel
Food Category	Nuts and seeds
Commodity	3.6.10.2 Oilseeds: Peanuts
Maximum Level (ppm)	12
State	Pending
Regulation Effective Date	7/1/2026
Regulatory Notes	The maximum level does not apply to oilseeds for crushing and oil refining, provided that the remaining pressed oilseeds are not placed on the market as food. In case the remaining pressed oilseeds are placed on the market as food, the maximum level applies, taking into account Article 3(1) and (2). Fruits, tree nuts, vegetables, cereals, oilseeds, herbs and spices as listed in the relevant category as defined in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC (OJ L 70, 16.3.2005, p. 1). Tree nuts are not covered by the maximum level for fruit.

South Africa

Market	South Africa	
Contaminant	**Aflatoxin B1**	**Aflatoxins, total**
Food Category	Nuts and seeds	
Commodity	All other foodstuffs not specified (ready-to-eat)	
Maximum Level (ppm)	0.005	0.01
State	Pending	Pending
Regulation Effective Date	2/6/28	2/6/28
Regulatory Notes	No regulatory notes.	Aflatoxin B1 should not exceed 5 ppb.

Take Action / Recommendations

This report is meant to help our industry get high-quality pecans into successful export markets.

- ***For Exporters:*** *Track new and changing export limits through APC reports and updates from EPA and Codex. Share feedback and any MRL or contaminant concerns with APC.*
- ***For Shellers:*** *Know the MRL and contaminant limits in your target markets so incoming lots meet them. Pass any residue concerns or regulatory updates you see back to growers and industry partners.*
- ***For Growers:*** *Review the report and talk to your buyers to understand whether new regulations require changes in orchard management.*
- ***For Researchers:*** *Find research gaps where genetics and cultural management can help address changing MRLs and contaminants. Help develop ways to reduce residues and give extension agents the information they need to help growers prevent and manage MRL and contaminant issues.*

Disclaimer: We issue reports to inform APC of ongoing regulatory developments at EU level. Every effort is made to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up to date. If errors, omissions, or misleading statements are brought to our attention, we will try to correct them. However, we accept no legal responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to the information provided in this report and usemade thereof.

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