



# **FAS/EPA Database Presentation: International Pesticide Maximum Residue Level (MRL) and US-Canada Grower Priority Databases**

*(Note: May 31 Version of Presentation)*

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# FAS/EPA MRL Database Presentation Agenda

## I. Introduction

- Bryant Christie Inc. background

## II. FAS/EPA International MRL Database

- History and background on the database
- How is the database maintained?
- Database use trends
- Recent and future improvements to the MRL Database

## III. US-Canada Grower Priority Database

- Background and purpose of database
- Current actions
- Discussions on the future of the database

## IV. The role of databases in international MRL policy changes

## II. FAS/EPA International MRL Database



# Background on the FAS/EPA International MRL Database

- Located at <http://www.mrldatabase.com>
- Most consulted resource for U.S. and international MRLs
- Sponsored by USDA and EPA
- Database origins: Taiwan introduces MRL system in 1999
- Database expanded over a series of years: currently includes **85** markets, **377** commodities, **336** pesticides and **69** veterinary drugs
- Recently expanded to include additional commodities, markets, and features

# Background on the FAS/EPA International MRL Database – cont'd

- Only includes permanent U.S. MRLs (may change in future)
- Foreign MRLs included if they correspond to U.S. MRLs (export-oriented for US growers)
- Search by: commodity, pesticide, veterinary drug, and market
- Updated on a daily basis to include latest MRLs from E.U., Japan, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and other major markets
- Searches can be exported as Excel spreadsheets

# How is the database maintained?

- Constant regulatory monitoring -- activities occur on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis
  - **Daily:** Review official sources in primary markets (Canada, E.U., Japan, etc.)
  - **Weekly:** Review official gov't sources in secondary markets, WTO SPS Notifications, FAS attaché reports
  - **Monthly:** Review official gov't sources in tertiary markets, request updates from foreign ministries
  - **"Cascades":** New EPA tolerance prompts global review for any corresponding foreign MRL

## How is the database maintained? – cont'd

- Data verification process mimics regulatory monitoring – data accuracy is paramount
  - **Country reviews:** Each market is fully reviewed at least once every 18 months.
  - **Partial audits:** Periodic sampling of data; samples are cross-references against most recent foreign MRL regulation
  - **User inquiries:** Users can submit questions to database team – if data is brought into question, inquiry commences. Any instance of incorrect data triggers partial audit; any additional data inconsistency prompts immediate & full country review

## Database use trends

- Database use is expanding and continues to grow
  - **2009 YTD: 22,000+ users (on pace for 54,000+ users in 2009)**
  - **2008:** 48,000+ users (184 users/business day)
  - **2007:** 33,000+ users (126 users/business day)
  - **2006:** 26,000+ users (100 users/business day)
- Growers and shippers are turning to the MRL Database to compare MRLs and ensure their products avoid trade disruptions

# Recent Improvements

- Significant expansion launched on March 1, 2008: database now includes bulk commodities, animal products and veterinary drug residue standards
  - Additional markets, commodities, pesticides, and veterinary drugs
  - Scroll-over notes provide important MRL details to users, such as crop group information, e.g. an orange MRL search may yield, “This MRL is set for citrus” MRL comparisons now easier & more relevant
  - Improved user interface & search criteria flexibility

# Future Improvements

- Several improvements currently under consideration – industry input is always welcome and is key to making this a successful tool.

## Near term actions

- BCI will continue to maintain database and expand database to include additional markets & commodities for recently added commodities
- Sponsors looking for add'l funding to add Section 18 tolerances and to separate vet drug MRLs from non-animals MRLs.

## Long term ideas

- Reinstatement of Market Information Pages – brief summaries of foreign regulatory environments
- Residue definitions, notes indicating MRLs at Limit of Detection

## II. US-Canada Grower Priority Database



## Background and purpose of database

- Can be found at:  
<http://www.uscanadagrowerprioritydatabase.com>
- Origins in NAFTA TWG on Pesticides
- Goal: central information point for grower registration and MRL priorities in US and Canada
- Priorities can be sorted by crop, AI, brand, registrant, and priority level

## Current actions

- Funding provided by USDA TASC funds
- Coordinated by MCFA under leadership of Dan Botts of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
- Effort to update priorities information provided by original submitters (growers and registrants)
- Priorities to be adjusted to account for developments since 2007
- Seeking additional priorities from other industry groups

## Discussion on the future of the database

- Meetings on database held in Ottawa last week
- Included EPA and PMRA officials, US and Canadian growers, and registrants
- Discussions focused on including Canadian grower priorities in the database
- Additional meetings expected in the coming weeks

# Databases & International MRL Policy Developments

- Constant changes in foreign MRL regulations underscores the need for easily an accessible, intuitive resource for making MRL comparisons
- Database assists growers in responding to, and preparing for, regulatory changes
- Accessibility and transparency of regulations can influence adoption of standards
- While not deliberately protectionist, foreign standards often differ from U.S. and Codex standards
- Consumer concerns, demographics, politics all contribute to move toward national MRL standards
- Examples of recent MRL reforms: E.U., Japan, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia. Also, expanded role of Codex.

On behalf of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and U.S.  
Environmental Protection Agency,  
Thank you.

Questions are welcomed.