

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 26 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000136

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Carbendazim in Orange Juice

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon Nick

Question:

Although carbendazim is banned for use within Australia, imported oranges and frozen concentrate orange juice (FCOJ) may still contain carbendazim. As the main provider of orange juice imports, Brazil continues to export carbendazim contaminated FCOJ to the country without limit, while domestic suppliers must find alternative fungicides and bear the cost of their development. Given carbendazim contaminated FCOJ is cheaper than locally produced orange juice, these imports are putting pressure on local growers and threatening the future of the local industry.

I understand Australia allows the presence of carbendazim in citrus products at 10 parts per million. Can FSANZ advise if this is still the case? What is the maximum residue limit?

Answer:

No, this is not the case.

Through Proposal M1008, Food Standards Australia and New Zealand proposed new maximum residue limits (MRLs) for carbendazim in a number of foods, including oranges. An MRL for carbendazim residues in oranges of 0.2 mg/kg was subsequently included in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) and came into effect in January 2013.

There is no MRL for carbendazim in 'citrus products'. Instead, the following specific citrus types are listed in the Code (with their respective MRL values) for carbendazim: Citron (0.7mg/kg), Grapefruit (0.2), Lemon (0.7), Lime (0.7), Mandarins (0.7), Mineola (0.7), Oranges (0.2), Shaddock (pomelo) (0.2), Tangelo [except Mineola, 0.2] and Tangors (0.7).