Results from the Danish monitoring programme for pesticide residues from the period 2004–2011

The Danish pesticide residue monitoring programme evaluates compliance with the maximum residue levels established by the EU and monitors the residue levels in foods to enable an evaluation of the exposure of the Danish population to pesticides. The latter part of the programme included 25 different fruits, vegetables and cereals and processed foods. The commodities were chosen based on their contribution to the intake of pesticides in the Danish population. A total of 17,309 samples were collected during 2004–2011. The monitoring showed that the frequencies of pesticides were higher in samples of foreign origin than in samples of Danish origin both for samples with residues above or below the MRLs. Overall, pesticide residues were more frequently found in fruits and vegetables than the other groups of commodities; fruits had higher frequencies than vegetables. Residues above the MRLs were found in 2.6% of the samples. In plant commodities, 163 different substances were found in measurable concentrations. Residues of more than one pesticide (multiple residues) were found in 27% of all samples. A comparison of the frequencies of pesticide residues in commodities from different countries showed that Danish commodities with a lower frequency of pesticides.