



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Pesticide Data Program--Progress Report

February 2004

The Pesticide Data Program. The Pesticide Data Program (PDP) was initiated in 1991 as part of a USDA-wide food safety initiative. Since that time, PDP has tested a wide range of commodities in the U.S. food supply, and Congress "...recognizes the importance of the Pesticide Data Program (PDP) to collect reliable, scientific-based pesticide residue data that benefits consumers, food processors, crop protection, pesticide producers, and farmers." Using the most current laboratory methods, PDP has tested both fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, grains, milk, beef, poultry, and drinking water for pesticide residues.

PDP Management. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) coordinates PDP, manages sample collection and testing, and publishes annual reports. Other USDA agencies provide support for PDP activities: the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) conducts nationwide surveys of food consumption; the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts surveys on agricultural chemical usage and pest management practices used in production of fruit, nuts, vegetables, field crops, and livestock; and the Economic Research Service (ERS) assesses the economic implications of changes to pest management practices or pesticide regulations.

PDP Focus on Children's Foods. In response to the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act and a 1993 report by the National Academy of Sciences, PDP focuses primarily on foods consumed by children and provides critical, realistic pesticide residue data for EPA to use in assessing dietary exposure to pesticides. The data provided by PDP supports the food safety responsibilities of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

PDP Sampling. Samples for PDP testing are collected from the national food distribution system

employing statistically reliable schemes designed for each PDP commodity so that the pesticide residue data are representative of exposure in the U.S. diet. Fruit and vegetables are collected at over 600 sites. Sampling of grains, meat, poultry, and some processed fruit and vegetables requires fewer sites to produce reliable statistics. A commodity included in PDP usually is tested for two contiguous years and after a period outside the program is reintroduced so that PDP data reflect current pest management practices.

PDP Testing-A Federal/State Partnership. State departments of agriculture work with USDA to collect and test samples. California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin are part of the PDP effort. Two USDA laboratories also contribute to PDP testing—the AMS National Science Laboratory in Gastonia, North Carolina, and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration Laboratory in Kansas City, Missouri. PDP laboratory methods are continually reevaluated and improved as necessary so that residues can be detected at extremely low concentrations.

PDP Data. USDA recently prepared a summary of the 2002 PDP data. This summary, along with data from previous years, is available on the Internet or by contacting the AMS Monitoring Programs Office (MPO). See the contact information at the end of this Progress Report.

PDP in 2002. In 2002, PDP tested 12,899 samples—10,056 samples of fruit and vegetables, 725 barley samples, 495 rice samples, 924 beef samples, and 699 samples of drinking water. This included the testing of 14 fresh fruit and vegetables (apples, asparagus, bananas, broccoli, carrots, celery, cucumbers, mushrooms, onions, peaches, pineapples, potatoes, spinach, and

*"PDP data continue to demonstrate that the Nation's food supply is among the safest in the world."
--A.J. Yates, Administrator, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service*

sweet bell peppers), 4 processed commodities (apple juice, apple sauce, sweet peas, and sweet corn), barley, rice, beef, and drinking water.

Approximately 78 percent of food samples were domestic and 20 percent imported (less than 2 percent were of unknown or mixed origin). Approximately 47 percent of the fruit and vegetable samples, 15 percent of barley samples, 18 percent of rice samples, and 15 percent of the beef tissue samples had detectable residues. Residues detected in beef samples resulted almost entirely from low-level detections of persistent chemicals that have been cancelled for agricultural use. Only 0.3 percent of all samples had residues that exceeded an established tolerance level.

In drinking water, PDP detected low levels (measured in parts per trillion) of some pesticides, primarily widely used herbicides. None of the detections exceeded established EPA Maximum Contaminant Levels or Health Advisory levels.

PDP in 2003. The 2003 program continued the testing of barley and 6 fresh fruit and vegetable commodities that were part of the 2002 program—aspargus, cucumbers, mushrooms, onions, sweet peppers, and spinach. Four additional fresh commodities—cantaloupe, pears, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes—were added to the program. PDP tested butter, canned asparagus, canned green beans, canned peaches, and frozen peas and corn. Drinking water testing continued for samples collected in California, Colorado, Kansas, New York, and Texas.

In 2003, PDP initiated a special project in response to an EPA request. The testing of triazole fungicides and metabolites in fresh apples, peaches (canned and fresh), and wheat flour was begun to assist EPA in making decisions concerning new fungicide registrations.

PDP also provided samples for an additional 6 commodities (bananas, eggs, grapes, milk, peanut butter, and tomatoes) for triazole analyses.

The 2003 data and a summary report will be available early next year.

PDP in 2004. In 2004, PDP will initiate testing of grapes, lettuce, oranges, strawberries, milk, and winter squash and will continue to test fresh commodities that were part of the 2003 program—apples, cantaloupe, cucumbers, pears, peppers, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

PDP also introduced a new processed commodity—canned spinach, and will continue to test canned green beans and canned peaches. The drinking water testing will also continue this year.

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Data and Reports. PDP data and reports are available from MPO and on the USDA Web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/science/pdp>.

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