



STATUS OF THE BENOMYL AND MANCOZEB MAXIMUM RESIDUE LEVELS IN THE USA FOR CITRUS

Benomyl

This notice is aimed at current and potential future suppliers of citrus to the US market, but especially producers from areas in South Africa where citrus black spot (CBS) is known to occur. The purpose of the notice is to urgently bring to your attention the fact that the status of the Benomyl MRL is lower than previously understood.

In simple terms the Benomyl MRL applicable for fruit destined for the US is the limit of detection (LOD) (i.e. no residues should be detected on the fruit). This is obviously way below the original 10 mg/kg believed to be in effect. The implication is that Benomyl (and Carbendazim) should not be used on citrus fruit destined for the US at any stage later than 90% petal fall.

Sometime prior to 2004 the EPA had established the Benomyl MRL (10.0 mg/kg) and in 2008 indicated that it would be revoked at a future date. However, the 10.0 mg/kg MRL continued to be published in official documentation well beyond 2008. Sometime between 2011 and 2016 it was dropped from official communication and by default the MRL became the LOD.

At the same time the Thiophanate-methyl (another product in the Benomyl residue breakdown group) MRL was also in place at 0.5 mg/kg. Use of Benomyl was acceptable on the basis of this Thiophanate-methyl MRL tolerance. It is clear now that this MRL has also been revoked and therefore no longer provides an opportunity for the continued use of Benomyl.

Mancozeb MRL in the US and Canada

It is appropriate to remind citrus producers looking to ship to the US market that the US MRL for Mancozeb is 10.0 mg/kg for mandarins but set at LOD for other citrus

types, i.e. no residues should be detected on citrus fruit other than mandarins. This precludes the use of Mancozeb on citrus to the US other than for mandarin-types.

The Canadian MRL for Mancozeb remains at 0.1 mg/kg for all citrus types (= default MRL where no positive MRL has been set). The relevance here is that any fruit diverted from the US to Canada on route will need to comply with the Canadian MRL tolerances. A good track record in relation to MRL compliance is needed for Canada given the expensive and clumsy Standard Operation Procedure that could be re-introduced by DAFF should there be high numbers of MRL exceedances.

In both the US and Canada Mancozeb is under review. This process is taking much longer than expected but must be completed before applications can be submitted to have the Mancozeb MRLs revised upwards.

Conclusion

Growers preparing a citrus crop for the US and Canadian markets need to understand these revised MRL tolerances and adjust spray programmes accordingly and if possible at this stage in the season. In particular, Benomyl (Carbendazim) products should not be sprayed later than 90% petal fall in order to achieve residues below the level of detection in the US.

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