Maximum levels for pesticide residues (amend. direct. 76/895/EEC, 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC, 90/462/EEC)

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The Council's procedure for adopting maximum residue levels is highly inflexible and clearly hinders the application of the Directives on the fixing of maximum pesticide residue levels. Crop diversification is indirectly being held back. The largest crops, or the most widespread throughout the EU, have MRLs for virtually all the pesticides covered, while smaller-scale crops, which might in the future provide an answer to the problems of farming in small districts, may well be left without means of controlling pests, since there is no private research into the appropriate pesticides. The ESC endorses the Commission's amendments to the Directives in question, but would make a number of comments: - In the ESC's view, the Commission's extension of the Directive to dried, processed and composite products is of benefit to consumers. - The application of MRLs to products for export to third countries is also a positive step. The Committee considers it would be most appropriate for Community MRLs to be set under a III-b type Regulatory Committee procedure, thereby ensuring an adequate degree of control over Commission action. The Commission should be urged to prepare, as soon as possible, correcting mechanisms for the calculation of MRLs for processed and composite products. Similarly, such products must be covered by procedures for the resolution of conflicts (protecting Treaty Articles 30 to 36) and for monitoring. An international pesticide information exchange office should be set up.