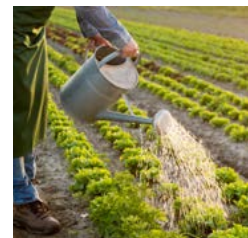


The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF)

# Annual Report 2022

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Health and Safety Executive



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# Chair's Foreword

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF) is a Defra scientific advisory committee made up entirely of independent members with a wide range of expertise on issues relating to pesticide residues and the food supply chain. Consumers have a right to feel confident in the safety of their diet and we work to support this by ensuring the results of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) pesticide residue monitoring programme are freely available and independently scrutinised.

This is the twelfth annual report from the PRiF. In 2022, 3304 samples of food and drink available in the UK supply chain were tested for pesticide residues and up to 401 pesticides were tested for.

The monitoring programme is not a fully random sample as parts of the programme target food and drinks where we expect to find residues. The methods and technology used for analysis are always evolving, meaning we continuously see reductions at the level we can detect residues. Around 41.83% of the samples tested by the laboratories did not have any residues of the pesticides we tested for 1.82% of the samples contained a residue above the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) set by law. We examined these findings to see why a breach had occurred and to advise what action could be taken to help prevent recurrence.

HSE conducts a screening risk assessment of all the residues found in the pesticide residues in food monitoring programme. If screening identifies any dietary intakes exceeding the relevant health-based reference values, then HSE presents more detailed risk assessments, to consider whether there are any implications for health. Detailed risk assessments, where needed, are presented in the quarterly reports. It is useful to note, even when a food contains a residue above the MRL, HSE rarely finds any likely risk to the health of the people who have eaten the food. HSE will consider whether the residue may be of concern to a particular groups of vulnerable consumers such as babies, toddlers and the elderly.

Throughout 2022, PRiF has advised on quarterly reports on the results of the pesticides residues in food monitoring programme. They are published on Gov.UK [Pesticide Residues in food results Quarterly Reports](#). We also advised regularly on results for beans with pods, grapes and potatoes which are published monthly as part of a rolling programme. Both the results and sample details for the rolling and quarterly reports are published in an accessible, useable format on [Data.Gov.UK](#).

The requirements of EU exit mean surveys are reported separately for samples collected in GB and those collected in NI within each of the quarterly reports. The same level of analytical testing was applied, and risk assessments were performed for all samples. The PRiF remains deeply involved with all elements of the UK sampling programme. HSE, as the competent authority, will be publishing a summary of the results for GB, NI and UK as a whole in their [annual report](#) which can be read in conjunction with our report.

For information about the monitoring programme, please look at our web page on GOV.UK: [Pesticide Residues in Food Results of Monitoring Programme](#)

Please contact us if you have any comments: [prif@hse.gov.uk](mailto:prif@hse.gov.uk)

**Ann Davison**

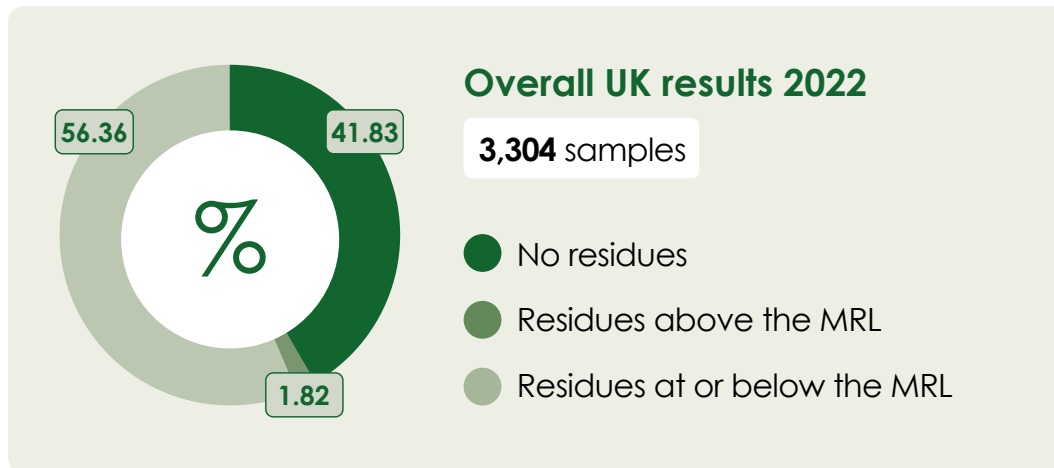
# Summary of 2022 programme

In 2022, 3304 samples were tested. Samples were collected from both Great Britain (GB) and Northern Ireland (NI). Each sample was tested for many different pesticides, of the pesticides looked for:

41.83% of samples contained none of the residues sought

56.36% of samples contained a residue at or below the MRL

1.82% of samples contained a residue over the MRL



All of the samples in which a residue was detected were checked for risk to the consumers by means of a risk assessment screening mechanism. In the PRiF quarterly reports of 2022 we published results of 29 detailed short-term risk assessments where HSE wanted to consider in more detail whether there was a concern for human health.

If, following the risk assessment of a sample, HSE has concerns about the potential risk to human health of people eating these foods, information about the food sample is referred to Food Standards Agency (FSA) for further consideration.

A detailed look at the set-up of the programme, overview of all findings as well as a breakdown of the GB and NI programmes, and follow-up action taken by HSE as the competent authority are available in the [HSE 2022 Annual report](#).

## Role of the Committee

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF) members are appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to advise Defra, the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Health and Safety Executive and the Food Standards Agency on a monitoring programme that checks food and drink in the UK for traces of pesticide residues.

The PRiF, as an independent body of experts, advises the government on the monitoring programme. One of the purposes of the programme is to check whether residues found in food and drink are above the MRLs set by law.

The programme also assesses whether the levels of residues found are likely to impact on human health. HSE assesses whether residues might be of concern to particular groups of vulnerable consumers such as babies, toddlers and the elderly. Where more than one pesticide is found with similar modes of action for certain high priority groups of pesticides, HSE assesses whether the impact of the sum of the residues is of concern.

The programme also acts as a check that results are as expected by the regulatory regime when the laws on using pesticides or on pesticide residues in food were set.

We provide advice to government on:

- presenting their findings resulting from the monitoring programmes of pesticide residues in food in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In particular, to ensure that results can be readily and appropriately understood by the public.
- planned and ad-hoc government programmes to monitor pesticide residues in foodstuffs. In particular, on foods to be surveyed (taking account of changing diets), availability of produce, location and frequency of sampling and pesticides to be sought.
- determining likely causes of any adverse findings detected in government monitoring programmes for pesticide residues in food.

- any industry, academic or other developments relevant to effective operation of government monitoring programmes for pesticide residues in food.
- other issues as requested by government relating to pesticide residues in food.

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food **does not:**

- advise whether pesticides should be approved for use or withdrawn from the market
- set government policy on pesticides
- take account of or assess the impact of pesticides on the environment
- promote or obstruct the use of pesticides

We meet four times a year alongside representatives from government departments who attend our meetings as officials. HSE provides our administration

## Communicating the results and work of the monitoring programme

We want as many people as possible to be aware of the official pesticide residue testing programme and to understand what we do. To do this we ensure:

- HSE publishes all the monitoring data on [data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk) in an accessible format every quarter
- HSE publishes the results of the rolling reporting on [data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk) every month
- We publish an annual report in plain English
- Our Chair is available for interviews with the media
- Worked with HSE to prepare some extra background and explanatory information, including a glossary in each quarterly report.

If you would like to receive notifications of publications, please email [pesticideresiduesteam@hse.gov.uk](mailto:pesticideresiduesteam@hse.gov.uk) to join the mailing list.

## Activities in 2022

### Actions following non-compliant results

Throughout 2022, we have advised government on follow-up action where appropriate. If residue results suggested possible illegal use of a pesticide within the UK, then HSE's enforcement branch conducted an investigation. Where a non-compliant residue occurred in a product grown outside of the UK, HSE notified food brand owners of non-compliant results and asked the producer to investigate the cause.

PRiF members have experience of previous residue issues in a variety of agronomic and food industry sectors. PRiF members do not take part in investigations, or pre-empt them, but are able to give HSE advice on likely causes for non-compliant residues. Examples include the likelihood of spray drift or pesticide volatilisation under specific weather conditions, whether residues could carry-over in soil or growing substrates or could have arisen from off-label authorisations for specific pesticide use. Members also advise on the length of the growing period and on plant structure.

We also consider the likelihood of the food in fact being grown elsewhere than that given on the label, which might just be where the food was packaged. For example, many frozen goods which are labelled with the country of origin as the UK are in practice grown outside the UK. Members worked with HSE in identifying the type of products unlikely to have been grown and frozen in the UK. This included highlighting that there would be products where there would be some limited UK production and freezing but the product is primarily sourced from outside of the UK.

### Prosulfocarb and apples

During 2022 we saw four samples of UK grown apples which had a residue of prosulfocarb. HSE noted there were two Plant Protection Products (PPPs) which contained this active substance with an extension of authorisation for minor use on apples. Members advised that the extension of authorisation had a restriction that any fruit harvested within 12 months of use must be destroyed. The products should not be used on apple trees in production. Following our advice, HSE passed details of these samples to their enforcement team for further investigation.

Members further considered the findings. They advised HSE that the most plausible cause of the residues was vapour drift from an adjacent treated arable field along with a 'perfect storm' of a late apple harvest in 2021 and early drilled cereal crops which would have received herbicide treatment before apples were picked.



The use of prosulfocarb is already under strict control, notably in terms of the types of nozzles to be used to minimise spray drift, therefore the issue we saw in these four samples was most likely to be due to application timing of the early drilled cereal crops and the prevailing temperatures at the time of application, resulting in residues from volatilization.

The Committee will continue to closely monitor the situation and report on further findings.

### **Potatoes and imazalil**

Another incident of note concerns samples of potatoes that contained a residue of imazalil. Members advised HSE that imazalil is authorised for use on seed potatoes only, therefore no residues should be detected in potatoes for consumption. The detections suggested that either there had been cross-contamination, or a selection of larger seed potatoes had been incorrectly sold into the market for consumption.

HSE wrote to multiple potato industry groups to inform them of the findings and reminding them of the label requirements. Two responses were received from the industry groups, who, we were pleased to see, acted to inform their members, reminding them of the importance of the correct use of imazalil. However, members of the PRiF felt that no specific planned changes to current practice had been set out to prevent further occurrences.

As one of the samples with this residue was grown in Scotland, the Scottish Government took on board our advice and worked with their Potato Branch to avoid future occurrences. They issued a letter to all Scottish seed growers notifying them of the finding in the monitoring programme and reminded them of the label restrictions that apply. They also reminded seed growers that dual cropping, i.e. taking seed and crops for consumption from the same stocks, notably post-harvest, was not recommended and is likely to result in MRL exceedances. Steps should be taken to ensure that there is no cross-contamination of tubers on farms, from machinery, bags or boxes.

Potatoes continue to be included in the monitoring programme, currently collected each month. So, PRiF will continue to closely monitor this risk.

## Feedback from producers

At each of our meetings, we have used our members' expertise to help HSE assess producers' written summaries of completed investigations and corrective actions to determine whether there is a need for a change in practice or guidance. The responses that are received are usually from major retail outlets and their suppliers who have the capacity to do an in-depth investigation into the source of the residue and put steps in place to avoid any further non-compliance. However, many of the non-compliant samples have been collected from wholesale markets or smaller retailers and responses are not often seen from these suppliers and retailers. We know this is probably because smaller retailers and wholesalers do not have the same resources or technical support as the big retailers and therefore do not carry out a similar investigation.

We work closely with HSE to consider how best we can raise awareness and understanding across areas of the food supply chain. This work is primarily managed by the communication sub-group, which works regularly to ensure we are meeting our goals.

## Producer follow up actions

It is very helpful when producers give us information on the way they have adapted to avoid a repeat of residues over the MRL. This allows us to better understand and contextualise similar findings in the future and more importantly prevent future cases by working with HSE to highlight best practice.

## Ongoing Activities

### Chlorate and Infant food

The pesticide sodium chlorate is a residual broad action weed killer that is no longer authorised for use. Until June 2020, residues of chlorate were subject to a default MRL of 0.01 mg/kg. This default was set at the nominal detection limit rather than upon an assessment of health risks. This is normal practice for pesticides that are not approved. However, in this case, the legislation had no provision that chlorate residues in food might come from sources other than pesticide use. Chlorate can originate from chlorine-based disinfectants and from the chlorinated public water supply. These are used in crop irrigation and in food production to ensure microbiological safety; for water treatment, washing and other processing. Such uses could lead to chlorate residues above the pesticide MRL which were still subject to the pesticide legislation.

PRiF was concerned that enforcement of the pesticide MRL did not inadvertently compromise microbiological safety. UK government departments and industry groups shared this concern. As a result, the EU agreed new MRLs for chlorate that came into force on 20 June 2020. The new chlorate MRLs include a footnote referring specifically to taking account of the use of biocides during processing in addition to the MRLs for food as harvested or initially produced. The footnote exceptionally specifies that for considering compliance with chlorate MRLs, simple types of processing that do not affect the other residue levels, such as packing, washing, chopping and freezing can be taken into account. The responsibility for providing evidence showing that residues from processing can be taken into account, lies with the food business operator.

Infant food and infant formula milk is an exception. Infant food and infant formula are set under separate legislation managed by UK health departments. The footnote that applies to other foods cannot be used for infant foods, although residues occur for the same reasons. Therefore, a precautionary MRL of 0.01 mg/kg applies to any pesticide residue. In 2022 we found two chlorate residues above the pesticide MRL in infant food. Each residue was risk-assessed and we concluded in all cases that an effect on health from the chlorate residues was either not expected or unlikely. We are satisfied that the origin of these residues is not pesticides but is chlorate from water used in manufacturing or chlorate as a residue from disinfectant use. Manufacturers and their trade groups have kept us updated on the strategies the industry is adopting to minimise the presence of chlorate without compromising microbiological safety.

PRiF will continue to publish an explanation of this context alongside chlorate results. We are not advising that food companies change their existing practices as a result of these findings. We exclude chlorate results from some year-on-year pesticide residue trend analyses.

We believe that the pesticide MRL is an inappropriate tool for managing chlorate residues from the use of water and disinfectants in infant food production. We have made sure that the lead government departments, co-ordinated by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are aware of the situation. We are grateful for DHSC engagement with us on the issue. There is ongoing work by the Nutrition Related Labelling, Composition and Standards (NLCS) Group to consider possible resolutions to this problem. We will continue to update our readers on findings and the agreed upon resolution.

## DDT

This year, DDT was found in 22 samples of fish, one sample of spinach and one sample of pork. The levels found would not be expected to have an effect on health, and overall are consistent with the continued decline of this pesticide in the environment. The use of DDT is banned in the UK and banned or heavily restricted in many countries worldwide. It isn't allowed for use on food crops anymore, but it is still used in some countries outside the EU as a public health insecticide. Residues of DDT take a long time to break down in the environment and can accumulate in fatty tissue, which is a major reason that it has been banned in the UK; the EU and many other countries.

Due to the bans and restrictions on use, the levels in food have decreased substantially since the 1960s and 1970s. Even so, because it takes a long time to break down, we do expect, and do see, occasional DDT residues in the monitoring results. Overall, the incidence and the size of residues have fallen steadily over time, which is what we would expect. In recent years none of the findings were unusual, unexpected or of concern.

The residues found nowadays are at levels that would not be expected to have any effect on health, either in the short term or in the long term, when checked against today's understanding of the effect of DDT on health. As a committee, we take care to ensure we look thoroughly at this during our meetings, and HSE ensures that the Food Standards Agency is also actively involved in the considerations.

For residues found in 2022, we can tell from the chemical form detected by the laboratories whether the residues are from historic use (which is what is usually found). We ensure this is explained every time DDT results are published to try to make it as clear as we can that the results show food producers are not using DDT today. However, there are occasional media stories about DDT and various links and associations, which do not make this distinction.

## The bigger picture

People are concerned about health, the environment and how food is produced. Pesticides used in the incorrect way or in the wrong amounts can harm people, wildlife and the environment, so they must be handled with care. Pesticides can only be used in UK agriculture if they are used in line with the laws and guidance controlling their use.

As regulating pesticides is a complicated area, there are a number of different organisations involved. On behalf of Defra and the Devolved Government, the Health and Safety Executive authorises and controls pesticides for use in the UK, as well as monitoring pesticide residues in the UK food supply no matter where the food was produced. The Food Standards Agency has overall responsibility for food safety.

Most residues come from pesticides being used on crops. To work effectively, pesticides must be used in the correct amounts and at the right time. The amount of residue in a food is dependent on:

- How much pesticide was used
- When it was applied in relation to harvest date
- How it is metabolised by plants and animals
- How it breaks down in the environment

In addition to this, residues can sometimes be due to contamination (small amounts of pesticide that remain in the environment after legitimate use). Due to significant technical improvements in laboratory analysis, HSE now have the capability to detect very low levels of residues. So, it is possible that, as methods become more sensitive, more residues may be found.

HSE's work and open reporting system has encouraged producers and retailers to be responsible about their use of pesticides in their supply chains. We ensure HSE is transparent about their work and publish the results, including brand names, where samples were obtained and where possible who produced them.

### **The Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)**

The Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) is a Defra scientific advisory committee that is responsible for giving advice on the use of and handling pesticides and for considering the effect pesticides have on the wildlife and the environment of the UK. The ECP advises the government on specific details of science relating to the use of a pesticide, it takes account of any new information about an authorised pesticide to see if it should be used at a reduced rate, under different conditions or withdrawn from sale. We let the ECP know if we see something in our results that falls within their remit.

## ANNEX 1

# Terms of Reference

### Purpose of the Committee

1. The UK Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (the Committee) is established to provide independent scientific advice on the planning and operational delivery of surveillance programmes for pesticide residues in the UK food supply in both Great Britain (GB) and Northern Ireland (NI).
2. The Committee shall provide advice and views to the Ministers listed below on any matter within its remit, either in response to a request or at the Committee's initiative. The Committee will normally provide its advice to the Assessors (provided for in paragraph 13 below) but may provide advice directly to all or any of the following Ministers (referred to collectively in this document as "the Ministers"): the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland.

### Role of the Committee

3. The lead Defra Minister will set the Terms of Reference for the Committee with the consent of the Ministers. Any proposal to vary these Terms of Reference or abolish the Committee would also be subject to agreement by all the Ministers. In all these cases the Committee itself will be consulted; the Ministers will ultimately set the Terms of Reference of the Committee, while the Committee will determine its ways of working, adhering to the requirements in these Terms of Reference and Code of Practice.
4. The Ministers may receive: strategic work plans for particular areas of on-going work; reports and advice; and periodic reviews of the Committee's functions, public benefits and value for money.

5. The Committee will, as appropriate and within its remit:
  - Provide advice on the Government's presentation of findings resulting from monitoring programmes of pesticide residues in food in Great Britain (GB) and Northern Ireland (NI). In particular to ensure that results can be readily and appropriately understood by the public. A sub-group may be established to assist with development of this work.
  - Provide advice on planned and ad-hoc Government programmes to monitor pesticide residues in foodstuffs. In particular on foods to be surveyed (taking account of changing diets), availability of produce, location and frequency of sampling and pesticides to be sought.
  - Provide advice on the determination of likely causes of adverse findings detected in Government (and where relevant other national and international) monitoring programmes for pesticide residues in food.
  - Provide advice to Government on any industry, academic or other developments relevant to effective operation of Government monitoring programmes for pesticide residues in food.
  - Provide advice on any guidance relevant to effective operation of Government monitoring programmes for pesticides residues in food.
  - Provide advice on any work to develop the evidence base relevant to effective operation of Government monitoring programmes for pesticide residues in food,
  - Produce an Annual Report in accordance with guidance in the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees.
  - Provide advice on any other issue as requested by Government relating to pesticide residues in food;
  - Help the response to emergency situations by providing expert advice and opinion.
6. The Committee will provide independent advice and operate in line with the [Principles of Scientific Advice to government](#) and the [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#).
7. The Committee will make its scientific advice and views available to the public and other interested parties in a way which aims to be comprehensive, clear and timely.

8. Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) will maintain an oversight of the work of the Committee and will meet regularly with its Chair.

## Appointments and conduct of Members

9. The Chair and the Members of the Committee are independent appointments made through open competition, in line with the [Governance Code](#) on Public Appointments. Appointments are made by the Senior Responsible Owner within Defra in agreement with: Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland; The Food Standards Agency, Scottish Government; and the Welsh Government. These bodies will also agree the plans for each recruitment exercise.
10. Members are expected to act in accordance with the [seven 'Nolan' principles of public life](#).

## Working groups and additional expertise

11. Subject to the availability of funds, the Committee may: establish groups to support aspects of its work; and bring in additional expertise (from the UK or abroad) to advise on specific issues.

## Advisers

12. Advisers are officials, from any of the UK governments, with specialist expertise who can advise the Committee. At the time of preparation of these Terms of Reference, advisers are drawn from Defra, the Food Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and the National Reference Laboratory. Any future additions to this list will be arranged by agreement between the Committee and the relevant Department or body. Advisers shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend Committee meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.



## Assessors

13. Each of the following appoints one of their officials as an Assessor: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Food Standards Agency; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland; Scottish Government; and the Welsh Government. Assessors receive and respond to the advice and views supplied by the Committee to their Ministers. Where appropriate they are responsible for seeking the views of their Minister on the advice from the Committee. Assessors shall receive the meeting documents at the same time as Committee members and have the right to attend Committee meetings. They will contribute to discussions when invited to do so.

## Code of Practice

### Introduction

1. The Committee is bound by the [Government Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#) (CoPSAC), which is itself underpinned by the [Principles of Scientific Advice to Government](#) and the [Universal Ethical Code – Rigour, Respect and Responsibility](#) which is a statement of the values and responsibilities of scientists. However, against this general background – it is good practice to set out specific elements of a bespoke Code of Practice for the Committee. This Code of Practice therefore sets out the standards that members are expected to adhere to, the governance of Committee business, and various other administrative and practical arrangements. It is important to note that the PRiF COP supplements and highlights the key requirements of CoPSAC as relevant to the PRiF – however it is not exhaustively reproduced, even though it applies in full.

### Role and purpose

2. The UK Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food is an expert scientific committee for Defra and the devolved governments. Its terms of reference are set out in Annex I.
3. The Committee is comprised of: a Chair and members. Departmental assessors; advisors and a secretariat attend the meetings. It may be assisted in its activities by Expert Panels and/or short-life working groups working to clearly-defined terms of reference and procedures, with membership drawn from the Committee. Relevant advisers may be co-opted on a specified short-term basis to the Committee Expert Panel or short-life working group.

## Standards for members

### 4. Members will at all times:

- observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide and the management of this body;
- be accountable to the sponsoring departments listed in the Terms of Reference, for its activities and for the standard of advice it provides;
- follow the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#);
- comply with this code and ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities and that they are familiar with the function and role of this body and any relevant statements of Government policy;
- not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations; and
- not hold any paid or high-profile unpaid posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of this body. When engaging in other political activities, Members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion.

## Governance of committee business

### Expertise of members

5. Members are appointed for their personal, scientific expertise, or experience they can bring as a lay member and for the relevance of that expertise to the Committee's remit and work programme. The expertise which members bring to bear on Committee business will be recorded in the Committee's Annual Reports.
6. Whilst on the Committee, Members must ensure they remain up to date in their area of expertise to ensure the Committee is made aware of all relevant information to form their advice to Ministers/Governments.

7. If the Chair of the Committee, Expert Panel or short-life working group decides they do not have access to appropriate expertise to consider a specific issue, relevant advisers may be co-opted on a specified short-term basis to the Committee, Panel or Group. These advisers must be invited in writing and their role specified. They shall be subject to this Code including compliance with conflicts of interest requirements, expectations and standards of members, any non-disclosure agreements and all administrative processes.
8. Co-opting expert advice from existing committees that provide advice to other government departments and agencies such as the Food Standards Agency, UK Health Security Agency or their devolved equivalents, and others), the Defra and devolved governments network of evidence experts, or approved registers, is encouraged in the first instance. However, this should not prevent the Committee considering all options, including but not limited to: industry and research, academia, consultant experts.

### **Handling conflicts of interests**

9. Members must not be influenced, nor appear to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. All members should therefore declare any personal or business interest which may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to, influence their judgement. This should include, but not be confined to, personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests (further guidance is contained in Annex II). It should normally also include, such interests of close family members (a Member's partner or immediate family member who is a dependent of the Member (or of whom the Member is a dependent)), friends and/or acquaintances and of people living in the same household. Details on types of interests are contained in Annex II. In case of doubt, a conflict of interest should be declared.
10. On appointment Members of the Committee should inform the Secretariat in writing of their current interests. Members should inform the Secretariat of any change in their interests. They will be asked to declare relevant interests on an annual basis.

11. A declaration of any interest should also be made at any Committee meeting if it relates specifically to a particular issue under consideration, for recording in the minutes of the meeting. Members should not participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest, and should normally withdraw from the meeting (even if held in public) if their interest is direct and pecuniary; or their interest is covered in specific guidance issued by this body or the sponsor departments which required them to withdraw from the discussion or meeting.
12. Whenever an individual's circumstances change in a way which affects their interests, a further declaration should be made before the Member's next involvement with Committee work to reflect the change in circumstances (this could involve a conflict ceasing to exist or a new one materialising). The Secretariat will: maintain and publish details of interests declared in Committee Annual Reports; ensure potential conflicts of interest are identified to Members and the Chair during the course of the Committee's work; and record relevant details in notes of meetings (which will be published on the Committee's website).

### **What is expected of the Chair**

13. The Chair has particular responsibility for providing effective leadership. In addition, the Chair is responsible for:
  - ensuring that the Committee meets at appropriate intervals, and that the records of meetings and any advice to Ministers (normally via Government assessors) accurately details the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual members;
  - ensuring that a full range of scientific opinion, including unorthodox and contrary scientific views are appropriately taken into account;
  - ensuring that any scientific diversity of opinion among members of the committee is fully explored and discussed and if it cannot be reconciled is accurately reflected in the minutes of the meeting;
  - ensuring that every Member of the committee has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is ignored or overlooked, using, where appropriate, a structured process which ensures that all views are captured and explored;
  - ensuring that the Committee works in accordance with its Terms of Reference;

- adjudicating whether Members (including co-opted members) have a conflict of interest and where this arises what the Member's role should be in the Committee's deliberations;
- participating in the process for the recruitment of Committee members;
- engaging with the Defra Chief Scientific Adviser and scientific advisors in the DAs if appropriate, and Defra Science Advisory Council;
- representing the views of the Committee to the general public; and
- ensuring the new Members are briefed on appointment and providing an assessment of their performance, on request, when Members are considered for reappointment to the Committee or for appointment to some other public body.

### **What is expected of Members**

14. Members have collective responsibility for the operation of the Committee. They should:

- engage fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including guidance issued by the sponsor departments<sup>1</sup> or the responsible Ministers;
- ensure the sponsor departments and their Ministers receive the highest quality, timely advice;
- consider whether the questions on which the committee offers advice are those which are of interest to (and understandable by) the public and other interested parties;
- examine and challenge if necessary the assumptions on which scientific advice is formulated and ask for explanations of any scientific terms and concepts which are not clear;
- ensure that the Committee has the opportunity to consider contrary scientific views and where appropriate the concerns and values of stakeholders before advice is provided;

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<sup>1</sup> The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, The Scottish Government, The Welsh Government, The Food Standards Agency, The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland, and The Department of Work and Pensions

- respond appropriately to complaints, if necessary with reference to the sponsor departments; and
  - ensure that the Committee works in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
15. Members should not be circumscribed by the expertise or perspective they were asked to bring to the Committee. Members should regard themselves as free to question or comment on the information provided or the views expressed by other Members. If Members believe the Committee's method of working is not rigorous or thorough enough they should raise this with the Chair, deputy Chair or Secretariat. They have the right to ask that any remaining concerns be put on record.
16. Members are expected to consider the papers prepared before each meeting and formulate a view on items scheduled for discussion, as required. When there are very large or technically complex documents to review and summarise, the Chair may appoint one or more rapporteurs, drawn from the Members, for this purpose. Occasionally, sub-groups of Members may be established to discuss specific issues and report back.

## Other administrative and practical arrangements

### Personal liability of members

17. Legal proceedings by a third party against individual committee members of advisory bodies are very exceptional. A Member may be personally liable if they make a fraudulent or negligent statement which results in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or criminal offence under insider dealing legislation, if they misuse information gained through their position.
18. However, the Government has indicated that individual Members who have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence will not have to meet out of their own personal resources, any personal civil liability which is incurred in execution or purported execution of their functions. Members who need further advice should consult the Secretariat.

### **Engagement with Ministers**

19. The Committee's purpose is to provide government with access to independent, impartial and expert advice, on request or otherwise. By adhering to the [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#), the Committee will remain independent of Ministers. Whilst most of the Committee's engagement will be with officials, it has the right, where appropriate, to submit advice directly to Ministers.
20. Communication between the Committee and Ministers will generally be through the Chair except where the Members have agreed that an individual Member should act on their behalf. Nevertheless, any Member has the right of access to Ministers on any matter that they believe raises important issues relating to their duties as a Member. In such cases the agreement of the rest of the Committee should normally be sought.

### **Engagement with Defra Chief Scientific Adviser and Defra Science Advisory Council**

21. The Committee comes under the purview of the Defra Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), and through them, the Defra Science Advisory Council which supports the CSA in oversight of all Defra scientific committees, and in providing advice and challenge on the science underpinning Defra policies. This scrutiny and co-ordination of the Defra bodies providing science advice to the department ensures that Defra's evidence programme meets the needs of the department.

### **Terms of appointment**

22. Members are appointed in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Terms of office will usually be for periods of three years and Members may be reappointed for up to a further two terms. In accordance with the Code the total length of service on the committee should not exceed ten years.
23. Appointments may be terminated at a Member's request, or by the Senior Responsible Owner within Defra if Members fail to perform as expected of them, with notice periods of not less than three months.

### **Financial arrangements**

24. The Chair and other Members of the Committee do not receive salaries. However, Members are entitled to claim daily fees for the time they spend on Committee business. This covers attendance at meetings, as well as time spent on other committee-related activities. All fees paid are taxable. Members are expected to claim for a full daily rate for each meeting day.
25. Members are entitled to claim reimbursement for costs incurred in travelling (normally standard class) to and from meetings, including any necessary overnight stays, and for any necessary meals and refreshments covering the period of travel. All claims require supporting receipts, (for example for hotels, meals, rail tickets, taxis, car parking) which are verified by the Secretariat. Financial information on the Committee will be included in annual reports.

### **Meetings and formal provision of advice**

26. The Committee normally holds four meetings a year usually in closed session. In addition to Committee members and the Secretariat, attendance will usually include other officials from Defra, other Government Departments, devolved governments and National Reference Laboratory. Invited experts and speakers may also attend meetings.
27. The Committee should promote virtual or hybrid meetings wherever possible, taking into account the importance of the meeting and the quality of discussion. It should also be noted that hybrid meetings can enable greater diversity of meetings, permitting access for individuals who may otherwise be unable to attend. Where virtual or hybrid meetings are not possible or are likely to have a considerable negative impact on the quality of discussion and/or output, the committee should seek to minimise the environmental impact of in-person meetings.
28. When the Committee decides that it is appropriate to issue advice to Ministers/Government the Secretariat shall prepare a draft for the Chair. The Chair will agree the final advice, consulting Members where appropriate. The Secretariat will distribute advice to departments and feedback responses to the Committee.



29. When a difference of opinion arises between the advice provided by the Committee and the Minister/Government, if required, the Chair should seek to discuss the decision with the Senior Responsible Owner within Defra to ensure that the Chair understands and accepts the basis upon which the final decision was taken. If after discussion, the Chair still has reservations about the decision, resolution should be sought through engagement with the Defra Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA).
30. The Committee should not seek unanimity at the risk of failing to recognise different views on a subject. These might be recorded as a range of views, possibly published as an addendum to the full minutes. However, any significant diversity of opinion among Members of the committee should be accurately reflected in the body of the full minutes.
31. Whilst achieving consensus should be an objective, where this is not possible the record should include the majority and the minority positions, explaining the differences and reasons for them. It is not necessary to name those holding majority or minority positions, unless the individuals holding those positions so request.
32. Once a position is established by the Committee and conveyed to the Secretariat and Departments, Members should support that decision and recognise their responsibility not to undermine the authority of the Committee.
33. Although it is important that decisions are based on all the available evidence, sometimes advice has to be provided when there are serious gaps in the knowledge base and considerable uncertainty exists. Where this is the case the Committee should use its judgement to decide what the best advice is, based on expert judgement and experience of advising on similar issues in the past and ensure that gaps in data and knowledge are carefully recorded.
34. In the event that urgent advice is required, it will fall to the Chair to provide this initially.

### **National Emergency**

35. In the event of the Committee being required to provide advice to the Government in a National Emergency, the Chair will be contacted in the first instance to identify the relevant Members required to provide the advice. A virtual meeting would be held with those members, the Chair, Secretariat and Defra within 48 hours. The discussion and advice will be detailed in a formal advice note which will be published on the Committee's website.

### **Information about the Committee and its work**

36. Information about the Committee and its work is published on the Committee's website. Agendas will normally be published prior to each meeting. Full minutes of each meeting will normally be published alongside the National Pesticide Residues in Food Monitoring report which was discussed in the meeting.

37. There may be limited circumstances where information is not made available such as draft documents which are still in the process of development, or which contain commercially sensitive information. Any decision to withhold such information is taken in line with the requirements of the relevant access to information legislation, including data protection rules.

### **Press Enquiries**

38. Any Member receiving a request from the press or other enquirers to comment on matters which fall within the Committee's remit should in the first instance contact the Chair and Secretariat. The Chair and Secretariat will determine whether a response is necessary and if so, whether it should be handled, in the first instance, by Government/ Devolved government officials. If the response requires handling by the Committee the Chair and Secretariat will identify the most suitable Member to deal with the response. The Secretariat will provide briefing, if required.

## Secretariat

39. The Secretariat is provided by the Health and Safety Executive and can be contacted by emailing [prif@hse.gov.uk](mailto:prif@hse.gov.uk). The primary purpose of the Secretariat is to support the work of the Committee, with robust management and close planning of the Committee's timetable of work and working closely with HSE to provide information to the Members in a timely manner. It is responsible for ensuring compliance with relevant Codes and standards, for the good governance of committee business and for ensuring that the Committee does not exceed its remit. The Secretariat is also the normal channel for communication between the Committee, Departments and governments, and between the Committee and other internal and external interests. It is responsible for delivering standard Secretariat services, including – arranging and recording meetings, circulating papers, maintaining the Committee website and Register of Members interests, publishing Committee advice and annual reports, handling claims for fees and travel and subsistence from members, dealing with Freedom of Information requests pertaining to the Committee, liaising with external interests who wish to attend meetings.

## ANNEX 2

# Members

(as of 31 December 2022) and declarations of interest

### Chair

**Ann Davison** began her career at 'Which?' and has worked in consumer affairs and public service roles for most of her career, running consumer organisations and networks such as Foodaware: the Consumers' Food Group. She won the UK Woman of Europe 2000 Award for outstanding voluntary service.



Ann has served as a consumer representative on a number of government committees including Defra Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards, the Adult Learning Committee of the Learning and Skills Council and the Food Standards Agency's Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding Stuffs.

For nearly six years, she was Defra's consumer adviser and ran its consumer representatives' group. Ann co-founded the Fairtrade Foundation and chaired its Certification Committee for 11 years.

Ann also chaired the World Development Movement, established the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue and chaired its Trade committee. She served two terms as President of External Relations on the EU Economic and Social Committee.

Ann has been a trustee of the National Council of Women, is a member of the European Committee of the International Council of Women and is a representative of the Commonwealth Women's Network. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Ann volunteers in the world development charity sector, providing consumer insight and supporting research.

No interests declared

## Members

**Dr Jonathan Blackman** is a graduate of Wye College, University of London and studied for a DPhil at the University of Sussex.

He has worked as an agronomist and technical manager in the horticultural industry for nearly 30 years, and before that worked as a Soil Scientist and Research Scientist for ADAS. He holds the BASIS Diploma in Agronomy and his work involves advising growers of fruit, hops and ornamental crops and providing technical support to fellow horticultural agronomists working for H L Hutchinson Ltd.



In addition to growers, he has provided consultancy services to packers and industry bodies such as the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the British Hop Association. He also sits on the board of several industry committees and represents his employer on the Agricultural Industry Confederation's commercial horticulture group.

### Personal interest

- Marks & Spencer shareholding

### Current non-personal interests

- H L Hutchinson Ltd Technical Manager providing agronomic consultancy to growers and horticultural industry: Consultancy includes sales of crop protection products, fertilisers and other inputs. Aspects of role require regular contact with manufacturers and industry experts.
- Marden Fruit Show Society – Trustee and Member of General Committee
- Hereford Hop Discussion Group – Secretary & Treasurer
- British Independent Fruit Growers Association – Associate Member
- British Hop Association – Consultancy on crop protection issues
- Wye Fruit Limited – Consultancy on crop protection issues

**Ian Finlayson** has a BSc Hons in Horticulture from Bath University. He was involved in the creation of Good Agricultural Practice standards for the Red Tractor Scheme and the international Global GAP standard during his 16 years as technical manager at Sainsbury's Supermarkets.



Ian was chair of the Fairtrade Standards Committee, where he worked to promote social justice and relieve global poverty. He has also served as a director of Footprints4Food which provided cost-efficient carbon foot printing of agricultural products with the aim of reducing their impact on the environment.

He is currently Managing Director of Practical Solutions International which specialises in helping growers and suppliers work effectively with retailers in Europe. This has allowed him to gain extensive experience in Africa working with both small farmers and large export companies.

Ian brings his experience from his time as Technical Director for World Flowers, Wealmoor, Produce World and No1 Living. He is an expert in a range of food and cut flower supply chain. He has most recently been involved in a project funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, supporting growers to switch from air to sea freight for Kenyan produce.

### **Personal interests**

- Practical Solutions International Limited (PSI) – Director-Consultancy in food safety Sustainability and ethical production. Contracts include: work with agrochemical company collating industry based prohibited lists, running training courses for the food Industry and technical consultancy.

### **Current non-personal interests**

- Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) – Chair –technical advisory committee developing and monitoring the LEAF Marque standard.

**Dr Gill Hart** is a PhD Biochemist with over thirty years' experience in the development, validation and evaluation of diagnostic tests and testing services. Gill started her career as Senior Biochemist at the Hammersmith Hospital, London and subsequently worked for R&D companies responsible for the development and validation of unique diagnostic tests for both hospital and consumer use. In 1999 Gill set up her own consultancy to service the needs of the clinical diagnostics industry and her work included the design and development of fertility tests for consumer (home) use. Gill joined leading consumer health and wellness company YorkTest Laboratories in 2005 and, as Scientific Director, has applied her scientific and regulatory knowledge to all YorkTest services. Gill has been instrumental in developing effective consumer led communications within this industry through a variety of different media, focussing on the transcription of scientific information to make it more accessible and comprehensible to the general public.



No interests declared

**John Points** is an independent consultant, advising food retailers and producers on chemical and authenticity risk management, analytical testing, and interpretation of results. He also works on capacity-building projects for low and middle income countries who need to regulate and test food safety.



His previous career has been with Sainsbury's, and at LGC – one of the UK's national reference laboratories, where he led the teams responsible for food, residues, consumer safety and workplace drugs testing. At Sainsbury's, his role included management of residue monitoring programmes and follow up of results within the own-brand supply chain.

He is an active member of the Institute of Food Science and Technology's Scientific Committee, the Society of Chemical Industry's Food Interest Group, and the Royal Society of Chemistry's Food Group.

### **Personal interests**

- John Points Consulting Limited:
  - Consultancy to food industry, risk assessment and appropriate controls, analytical testing, incident investigation which includes those for pesticide residues.
  - Consultancy to laboratories in areas of: method validation accreditation, audit, logistics, capacity-building, including for pesticide residues.
  - The European Commission: Consultancy for the training and capacity for 3rd countries in residue analysis.
  - Consultancy to food industry within Certification Bodies such as site audit preparation.
- LGC Limited – Pension



**Debbie Winstanley** holds a BSc Hons in Agriculture from the University of Wales and is an Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society and a Governor of Harper Adams Agricultural University.



Debbie sits on the steering group of the Allerton project, a charity which champions biodiversity and good farming practice in commercial agriculture. Debbie is a member of the steering group of Cambridge University Potato Growers Association, a charity that supports and guides the development and implementation of potato research.

Debbie's extensive professional experience includes being a commercial farm agronomist for 20 years before working on potato agronomy at Cambridge University Farm. Debbie has also worked for Co-op Retail, where she worked with fresh produce suppliers and later Sainsbury's. Here she was first the Product Technologist for potatoes and vegetables, and then the Company Agronomist, notably working on pesticide residue reduction. Most recently Debbie's worked as UK Agronomist for PepsiCo where she continues to work part-time on research and development. Debbie provides agronomic support for a large farming business and technical support work for a small fertiliser supply business.

#### **Personal interests**

- Consultancy work for PepsiCo – Agronomist specialising in potatoes within the agro discovery team
- Sulphate Solutions LLP – Partner providing technical support in liquid fertilizer business.
- Strawsons Limited – Structural agronomy support within potato growing and storage work
- Harper Adams Agricultural University – Governor

#### **Current non-personal interests**

- JSH Retirements Benefit Scheme – a pension fund
- Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society

The Committee regularly reviews membership to ensure it has the right balance of expertise to meet the challenges it faces.

## ANNEX 3

# Fees and reimbursement

Members of the PRiF are not salaried staff but do receive a fee for attendance at meetings. They are not paid if they do not attend meetings.

### Chair's fees

Attendance fee £182

### Members' fees

Attendance fee £146

The Chair and Members also receive reimbursement of reasonable actual travel and subsistence when attending meetings.

In 2022, the cost of member's fees related to committee work and the cost of recruitment was around £9,500

The PRiF is assisted in the committee by the following officials:

- Mr Duncan Williams – Defra
- Mr Sam Phillips – Defra
- Dr Sadat Nawaz – National Reference Laboratory
- Ms Katie Viezens – SASA representing Scottish Government
- Dr Dermot Faulkner – Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) representing Northern Irish Government
- Dr Rebecca Scrivens – HSE
- Ms Helen Kyle – HSE
- Ms Helena Cooke – HSE

### PRiF Secretariat

Secretary – Rachel Merrick

Secretariat Member – Ethan Clabby

PRiF Secretariat

Ground Floor

Mallard House

Kings Pool

York YO1 7PX

Email: [prif@hse.gov.uk](mailto:prif@hse.gov.uk)

## ANNEX 4

# Analytical Sub-group

The Analytical Sub-Group (ASG) reviews the results of analysis by the laboratories before they are sent to HSE, to ensure their reliability. The group provide regular updates on issues of interest to the PRiF at each of their meetings.

Most of the members of the group are from laboratories. The group members during 2022 were:

- Helen Kyle – HSE (Chair)
- Dr Sadat Nawaz – National Reference Laboratory (NRL) Representative
- Helen Barker – Fera Science Ltd
- Mark Kearney – Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
- Kirsty Reid – SASA
- Laura Melton –SASA
- Dr Emma Ingram – HSE
- Helena Cooke – HSE

## Communications Sub-group

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food's Communications Sub-Group reviews all communications that the PRiF produces.

Most of the Members are from the Committee itself, the group members during 2022 were:

- John Points – PRiF Member (Chair)
- Ann Davison – PRiF Chair
- Dr Gill Hart – PRiF Member
- Debbie Winstanley – PRiF Member
- Helena Cooke – HSE

