

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF)

Minutes of the meeting of the Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF) 13 May 2026

The meeting was held as an in-person meeting

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food provides independent advice to the Health and Safety Executive, Food Standards Agency and UK Ministers on matters relating to the monitoring programme; this is the 57th meeting of the committee.

Those present:

Chair:

Ms A Davison

Members:

Dr J Blackman; Mr I Finlayson; Mr J Points and Ms D Winstanley

Representatives:

Ms H Cooke (HSE); Mr D Faulkner (Northern Ireland Executive); Ms H Ainsworth (Defra); Ms K Viezens (Scottish Government); Mr G Stark (HSE); Dr R Scrivens (HSE); Ms E Fox (HSE); and Ms C McCartney-Collard (FSA)

Other:

Mr J Clarke (ECP Chair) and Professor A Goswami (Defra Chief Scientific Advisor)

Apologies:

Dr S Nawaz

Agenda item 1: Introduction

1.1 The chair reminded the meeting of the sensitivity of the papers and their discussions. If members believed that they had a commercial or financial interest in any of the items being discussed, they are required to declare their interest to the chair and secretariat prior to the meeting. They may then be invited to absent themselves from the discussions and decision-making, unless invited to do so.

1.2 No conflicts of interest were declared.

1.3 The chair welcomed everyone to last meeting of the PRiF. The Chair also welcomed the chair of the Expert Committee on Pesticides, to the PRiF meeting.

Agenda item 2: Action points from PRiF Meeting of 28 January 2026

2.1 The secretariat provided an update of actions from the previous meeting.

2.2 Members noted that the follow up action taken by Northern Ireland in relation to a suspected unapproved use of glufosinate in potatoes was disappointing. HSE agreed to feed this back to NI, to see if any further work could be done.

Action: HSE

Agenda item 3: Matters arising

3.1 The secretariat informed the committee there were no matters arising to raise.

Agenda item 4: Monitoring Programme update

4.1 HSE updated the committee on the status of the 2026 programme, all work is progressing to target.

4.2 HSE confirmed the sample collection contract for 2026 has been signed and is in place.

4.3 HSE confirmed the Competent Authority annual report for 2025 will be drafted when the final data for Q4 has been confirmed.

Agenda item 5: Draft Quarter 4 2025 report

5.1 HSE presented Quarter 4 quarterly report of 2025. As in previous quarters, the report is split into GB and NI. The majority of discussion was around GB results due to no NI specific issues to raise. Overall, the findings in the report are similar to previous results.

5.2 The committee was asked:

- If they were aware of any information that could provide HSE with additional understanding on how any of the residues detected over the MRL may have occurred.
- If there were any other risk issues/suspected unapproved use they would like to discuss.

Great Britain data

5.3 Members discussed:

- A risk assessment was carried out for omethoate in a sample of beans with pods. Members asked whether dimethoate had also been tested. HSE confirmed that the assessment focused on omethoate rather than dimethoate, noting that the presence of omethoate is most likely due to dimethoate. A trace level of dimethoate was detected below the reporting limit which is well below the MRL. HSE will consult with the laboratory to consider expanding the wording. Members requested that it be noted that dimethoate was also identified.

Action: HSE

- Two samples of grapes were found to contain lambda-cyhalothrin. HSE has contacted the supplier for further information but has not yet received a response. As a result, HSE considered both a least-worst-case and a worst-case scenario when carrying out the risk assessment. HSE confirmed that a short-term health effect would not be expected if lambda-cyhalothrin were present, and that a short-term health effect would be unlikely if gamma-cyhalothrin were involved.
- HSE provided information on potential unauthorised uses. A UK sample of wine was found to contain metalaxyl. A member noted that wine labelled as UK may include up to 15% grapes from other countries. Members also highlighted that metalaxyl was only unauthorised on wine grapes in Great Britain in 2025; the previous authorisation expired at the end of 2024, with a new authorisation issued in April 2025.
- Members asked if all samples in NI are assessed against EU MRLs and where these are exceeded and an investigation shows the commodity originated from GB if GB MRLs apply? HSE confirmed that EU MRLs apply in NI. If a supplier provides evidence to show the product came from GB and comes under the NI retail movement scheme, HSE will apply the GB MRL and if compliant will take no further action.
- Members asked whether the NI movement requirements should be referenced. HSE confirmed that it will include clarification that Northern Ireland retail movement provisions also apply.

Action: HSE

- Members commented on the explanation of dithiocarbamates and suggested rewording. HSE noted that supporting documentation on its methodology includes a section on dithiocarbamates, and the wording in the draft Q4 report “other issues” will be clarified for consistency. Members noted that the current text suggesting “dithiocarbamates are likely to be natural” could be classed as misleading and suggested clarification that dithiocarbamates are not measured directly but are determined as carbon disulphide (CS₂) and the reference to “natural” and to organics should therefore be reconsidered to avoid confusion.

Action: HSE

- Members requested that the phrase “wound down” in relation to the PRiF committee be changed. HSE confirmed that it will revise the wording. The secretariat noted that for consistency this phrasing has been used since the future of the PRiF committee was first discussed but confirmed that it can be amended in line with the committee’s preference.

Action: Secretariat

- Members noted that a number of oat samples, from different brands, originated from the same factory and advised that the balance of selection of samples from the pool of supermarket own brands and leading commercial brands, needs to be monitored, to ensure a reasonable selection is collected to reflect the products on offer to consumers. HSE clarified that the monitoring programme is not designed as a surveillance programme and does not target specific brands. HSE reassured members that this is something that will continue to be kept under close review.
- Members noted the a number of MRL exceedances in potatoes, over time, of an insecticide, and questioned whether this issue should be referred to the ECP for further consideration.

Agenda item 6: Rolling reporting update

6.1 The committee noted that the results of the November/December 2025 rolling reporting have been published. The results for January/February 2026 rolling reporting were published in April 2026 and the results for March 2026 were published in May 2026.

Agenda item 7: 2027 Monitoring programme proposal

7.1 HSE informed the committee that the paper outlining the proposed commodities for 2027 had been circulated. HSE provided a detailed explanation of the methods used and the reasoning behind the selections. Discussion followed during which members requested clarification on the ranking tool applied to determine the proposed commodities.

7.2 HSE asked members to send their comments about the proposed commodity list to the secretariat by 27 May 2026.

Action: Committee members

Agenda item 8: Communications sub-group update

8.1 The secretariat informed the committee there was no change or update from the communications sub group.

Agenda item 9: PRiF 2025 Annual Report

9.1 The secretariat thanked members of the committee for their comments to date and asked if any further comments could be sent to the secretariat by 27 May 2026.

Action: Committee members

9.2 The chair requested some changes to some wording in the annual report, acknowledging the achievements of the PRiF.

9.3 The chair of the ECP commented on how long the PRiF website will remain once the committee is wound down. The secretariat confirmed the PRiF website will stay available for one year, everything on the website will then be closed and archived. The secretariat confirmed a link to the archive will be placed on the ECP website.

Agenda item 10: Defra Chief Scientific Advisor

10.1 The Chair welcomed the Defra Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA). The CSA thanked the Chair for the invitation and expressed her appreciation for the significant time and contributions made by PRiF members. She also thanked members for their ongoing commitment, emphasising the importance of communicating trustworthy information in a clear, transparent, and effective manner. Maintaining and strengthening public trust was highlighted as a key priority and one which was on the horizon for the CSA.

10.2 The Chair of the PRiF emphasised the importance of the committee's role in maintaining public trust, highlighting the need for openness and the use of clear, plain English. The Chair welcomed the CSA's commitment to the ongoing role of Scientific Advisory Committees.

Agenda item 11: Update from Defra

11.1 Defra updated the Committee on the commitment to negotiate the Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Agreement (SPS), with negotiations ongoing, expecting to conclude in June 2026.

11.2 Defra stated other strands of work in the National Action Plan (NAP) are also underway, implementing further commitment to Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Agenda item 12: Horizon Scanning

12.1 Members raised a query regarding residue variability and the future of precision agriculture and spot application of pesticides. HSE responded, there is a strong steer for innovation in precision application, much of the work focuses on risk assessment and residues, with HSE also undertaking research and development to better understand and support variable rate application techniques. There have also been updates to guidance, with EUPAF providing a solid framework to build upon. Further information can be found on the [EUPAF website](#).

Agenda item 13 AOB

13.1 Members asked if the Analytical Sub Group will remain in place. HSE confirmed it will not be changed and will remain in place, with the possibility of a name change.

13.2 Members suggested introducing an annual external stakeholder engagement meeting to provide broader input into forward planning. They highlighted the Veterinary Medicine Division (VMD) model where an annual plan is developed with stakeholder input as a good example to follow. HSE confirmed that they currently use inter laboratory meetings to discuss matters collectively. The secretariat noted, however, that the VMD model operates on a much larger scale compared to the Pesticide Monitoring programme.

13.3 The chair closed the final PRiF committee meeting, thanking all involved in the smooth running of the PRiF, particular attention was addressed to the hard work and dedication of the PRiF members.