



Pesticide newsletter

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Civil Society Activities



Spain: New report by *Ecologistas en Acción*: *Directly into your hormones. Guide to disruptive foods*

The Spanish confederation *Ecologistas en Acción*, partner of Justice Pesticides, launched in early May the new edition of its report [*Directly to your hormones. Guide to disruptive foods*](#) (*Directo a tus hormonas. Guía de alimentos disruptores*).

Based on official 2019 data from the pesticide residue monitoring program, conducted by the Spanish Agency for Consumption, Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN), the report makes the alarming observation that the level of exposure of the Spanish population to pesticide residues in food is far too high.

The consumption of pesticides is very high and is increasing year by year in Spain, the leader in pesticide sales in Europe in 2019. Among these chemicals, toxic residues are found in a significant proportion in food. The report shows that about

31% of the pesticides found in Spanish foodstuffs are harmful substances that are exceptionally authorized. According to the group, the legal limits of residues established in the legislation do not protect the health of the population against these substances, some of which are endocrine disruptors and have the ability to alter the hormonal system.

Ecologistas en Acción filed a complaint in January 2021 against the derogatory authorization of the use of a number of pesticides banned in the European Union. The Spanish Ombudsman (*el Defensor del Pueblo*) [agrees](#) with the group and considers that there is an irregularity in the way the authorities renew each year the authorizations issued on an exceptional basis for the use of non-compliant pesticides.

In a [letter](#) from May 2021 to the Minister of agriculture, the Mediator made seven suggestions to reinforce the control of the use of chemical substances authorized on an exceptional basis and to provide a stricter framework for the use and marketing of these pesticides, including the need to inform the public of the exceptional authorizations issued and to provide it with the studies and technical analyses justifying such derogations. He also asked the Minister to reconsider the exceptional authorization granted in 2021 for the neonicotinoid insecticide clothianidine for sugar beet crops, banned in Europe since 2018 due to its toxicity for bees.

The Mediator's opinion is not legally binding and the Ministry of Agriculture has yet to give its opinion on these suggestions. Nevertheless, this position of the Mediator, concomitant with the release of the report of *Ecologistas en Acción*, reinforces the efforts of those who contribute to the agro ecological transition of Spanish agriculture.

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