



Cutting Edge

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Update: Carbendazim EU MRL situation

Dear Growers and Exporters

This notice seeks to update growers with the latest development around the EU Carbendazim MRL. The official notification of changes to the EU Carbendazim MRL on citrus was published in March 2006 (Regulation 2006/30/EC amending 90/642/EC), wherein the new MRL was set at Limit of Detection (LoD), indicated as 0.1mg/kg.

In line with previous communication from CGA and CRI, a carbendazim MRL set at this LoD level would result in non-conformance of all fruit treated with fungicides that result in a carbendazim residue (Benomyl, Spotless, Bavistin, Bendazid, Knowin, etc). Cautionary notices published by CGA and CRI in November indeed helped to avert the crisis that would have occurred had growers sprayed carbendazim products in November 2005.

Following the release of the Regulation, it was brought to the attention of CGA that the UK would only be applying the LoD MRL from the 15th September 2006. Therefore, until the 15th September 2006 a Carbendazim MRL of 5.0ppm will apply on citrus in the UK.

- This indication from the UK authorities creates an opportunity for growers who had sprayed their fruit with carbendazim to send fruit to the UK, albeit for a limited time, as an alternative market to the Middle East.
- Citrus treated with carbendazim must not be sold after the 15th September 2006. Therefore packhouses and growers must calculate the last packing date for the UK based on conservative time frames for transport, storage, shipping and distribution, etc.
- Other EU member states: Changes to national legislation by each EU Member States to enforce the new EU Harmonized MRL might occur quickly, exposing growers to the risk that treated fruit arrives in the market but longer comply with MRL legislation.

Therefore, until such time as each EU member states can positively provide the SA citrus industry with an indication of when they will enforce the LoD MRL, as has the UK, it must be accepted that fruit exported to the EU member states must be residue free (below the LoD level).

- The use of Benomyl as a post-harvest treatment is strictly prohibited, and is not registered for such use by the RSA Registrar.

Yours sincerely

By email
Paul Hardman
CGA

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