



Cutting Edge

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QUATERNARY AMMONIUM COMPOUND RESIDUE CAUTIONARY

Dear citrus growers, packhouse managers and exporters,

Recent feedback from commercial residue testing in Japan has raised a possible concern with Quaternary Ammonium Compound (QACs) residues on citrus. QACs are used globally in food processing plants as disinfectants – one of the most common in South Africa citrus packhouses is **Didecyldimethyl ammonium Chloride** (DDAC), the active ingredient in products such as Desogerme, Prasin, Quattrokill, Sporekill and Terminator (used in fruit washing systems in packhouses), and any other QACs used throughout the food chain to maintain appropriate hygiene on equipment used to handle fruit.

Despite QACs having been used in South Africa for a number of years now, this is the first instance where the residue tolerances in an importing country have been exceeded (Japanese MRL = Limit of Determination). CGA/CRI are engaging with the distributors of these products,

counterparts in Japan and the exporter and packhouses involved to determine the likely cause of the MRL exceedances, and whether the Japanese Food Sanitation Laws actually prohibit the use of specific QACs. Aspects of the investigation include the validation of the analytical results and determination of whether the current residue analysis methods used in Japan differentiate between the (many) actives within the QAC group to isolate possible sources of QAC residues.

Until further details are available, packhouses managers packing fruit for Japan should note this current situation and consider reverting to alternative chlorine-based cleaning systems (e.g. HTH powder or the Buccaneer system). CGA/CRI will provide more information as soon as it is available. Please contact Keith Lesar at CRI (Tel: 013 759 8000) or myself should you have queries in this regard.

Kind regards
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