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In vino veritas: the alarming truth about pesticides in wine

Pesticides

A first-of-its-kind study by the Pesticides Action Network Europe, presented at the European Parliament today, has some alarming findings on pesticide residues in European wines.

German Green MEP **Hiltrud Breyer**, draftsman for the EP environment committee on the authorisation of pesticides, said:

"For the first time, 40 wines were tested for dangerous pesticides. The results are alarming, but also predictable given the intensive use of pesticides on grapes. All conventionally produced wines in the sample were contaminated and each of these bottles had an average of four different pesticides present. A total of 24 different kinds were found. Among these, five are classified by the European Union as being carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic (CMR) or endocrine disrupting.

We are particularly concerned that so many different kinds of pesticides have been detected. Even if the pesticide concentration is lower than has been recently found in fruit and vegetables, the residues contain a higher quantity of pesticides - a toxic cocktail with unknown additive or combined effects.

The study's results highlight an urgent need for Europe to get to grips with the problem of dangerous pesticides. Europe produces and consumes two thirds of the world's wine, and is also the world's biggest exporter.

Now the EU is reviewing the authorisation of pesticides, it must seize the opportunity to ban those that are dangerous. Contrary to claims by the chemical industry and lobby groups, a ban of CMR pesticides and those harmful to the hormone system would only affect 4.5% of the 507 currently authorised in Europe. This would represent a small step for industry, but a stride forward towards better protection of health and the environment.

As the EU Council of Ministers prepares to adopt a common position in May 2008, we call on all EU Member States to support the drive towards better food safety

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and a ban of dangerous pesticides."

Results of the study are available below :

- Full results of pesticide analysis of 40 bottles of wine bought in the EU - PAN
(http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/default/dokbin/226/226176.full_results_of_pesticide_analysis_of)
(pdf)
- Supporting Information - PAN
(http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/default/dokbin/226/226177.supporting_information_message_in)
(pdf)
- Press Release, Notes to Editors and Media Contact Details - PAN
(http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/default/dokbin/226/226178.press_release_notes_to_editors_and)
(pdf)