

Crop Care Federation of India

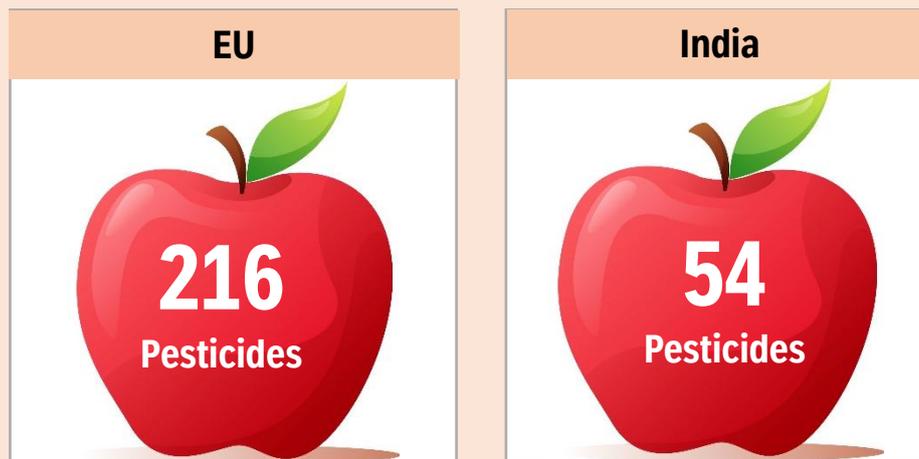
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Unregistered pesticide residues in imported EU apple. What should India do?



The numbers speak louder.

As many as **216** pesticides are registered for use in apple cultivation in the EU as against only **54** in India.

A recent study found that **85% of EU apple samples** showed a cocktail of pesticide residues.

The popular narrative that **European farmers use less pesticides** is wrong. Both in variety and in volume, they use more than Indian farmers.

Apple is just one example.

Under the recent India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), India has plans to import 50,000 tonnes of apple annually from the EU at a concessional duty.

Considering the quantum and variety of pesticides used in the EU, the apple imported into India can be expected to carry residues of pesticides that are not registered/approved in India.



The EU does not allow import of food products from India (or other countries) containing residues of pesticides not approved over there.

Under the FTA, there must be level playing field. India must practice what the EU practices.

India must ensure that the EU apple consignments comply with pesticide Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) set by our Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.

Level the playing field

India (FSSAI) should be strict and must return the food consignment imported from the EU, if found with pesticide residues > 0.01 ppm.

Quid Pro Quo (equivalent retaliation) levels the field.

Remember, in the year 2025, the EU rejected 125 food consignments from India applying 0.01 ppm import tolerance. India has not rejected any imported consignments so far on account of pesticide MRL violation according to the information received under RTI Act. This is strange and unacceptable.

Suggested Legal and Administrative Actions for a Level Playing Field:

- Detention and Seizure:** Consignments may be detained at the port of entry for testing, and if residues are confirmed, they are seized to prevent entry into the market.
- Re-exportation (Re-export):** The importer may be ordered to ship the contaminated cargo back to the country of origin.
- Imposition of Penalties:** FSSAI must impose heavy fines on importers or processors for violating the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- License Revocation:** Repeated violations shall lead to the cancellation of import licenses or trading permits.