



ISDRS Q1 NEWSLETTER 2023

International Sustainable Development Research Society

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3. Organic Food and Pesticides

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Consumers purchase organic food to avoid pesticides (Paull, 2020). Data from the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirm the wisdom of this strategy (DEFRA, 2022).

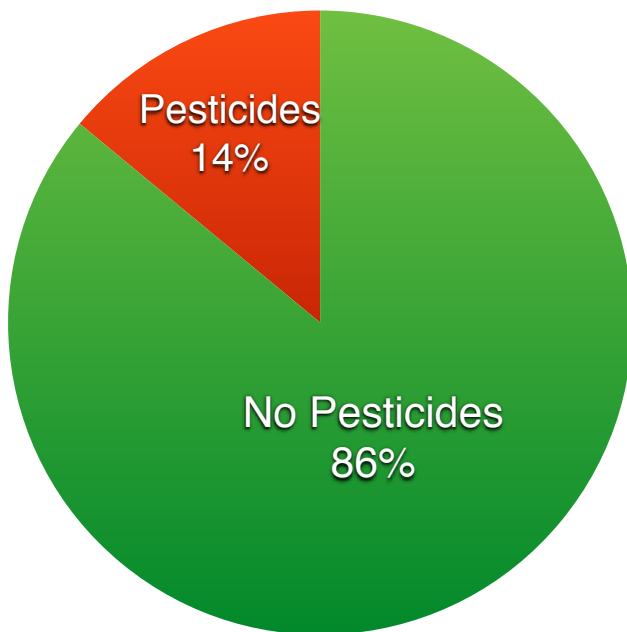
The study tested 373 samples of twelve different fruit and vegetables (UK grown and imported) for the presence of 398 different pesticides.

Most (85%) of the non-organic fruit and vegetables tested contained pesticides, while most (86%) of the organic fruit and vegetables tested did not contain pesticides (Fig.1).

For the non-organic fruit and vegetable samples (n=338), 85% (n=287) contained pesticides. Most of the samples containing pesticides (77%, n=221), contained multiple pesticides. Some of the samples containing pesticides (8%, n=24), exceeded the maximum residue limits (MRLs).

For the organic samples (n=35), 14% (n=5) contained pesticides. The organic samples containing pesticides comprised: 3 (of 4) spinach samples, 1 (of 4) tomato samples, and 1 (of 9) cucumber samples.

Organic Food



Non-organic Food

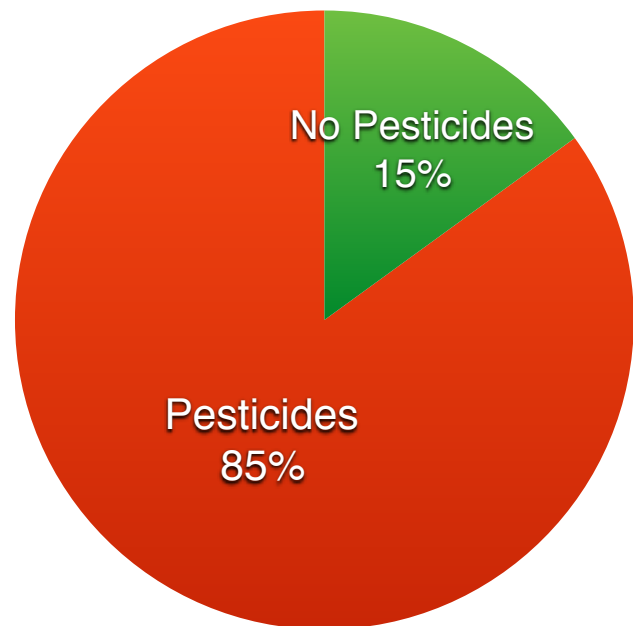


Figure 1: Most organic fruit and vegetables (86%) do not contain pesticides; most non-organic fruit and vegetables (85%) do contain pesticides (data source: DEFRA, 2022).

The results confirm the wisdom of consumers purchasing organic fruit and vegetables to reduce or avoid consuming pesticides.

References

DEFRA. (2022). Report on the Pesticide Residues Monitoring Programme: Results of Quarter 1 2022. London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Paull, J. (2020). Organic food and agriculture. In M. Gibson (Ed.), *Food and Society* (pp. 179–199). London: Academic Press.