

Introduction

At Waitrose, we take responsibility for our impact on the planet. We work tirelessly to protect and restore nature, creating a more sustainable future for generations to come. We work closely with our own-brand fresh produce growers and recognise the need for crop protection to ensure food is economically produced without compromising yield and quality.

Waitrose believes in minimising the use of pesticides to grow our fresh produce and recognise the potential risks involved to human health, the environment and biodiversity from crop protection practices, as well as wider public concerns. We set out requirements with our growers to ensure pesticides are used on a rigorous risk-assessed basis.

Our teams across fresh produce, agriculture and sustainable sourcing work closely with our growers to minimise the use of pesticides and embrace Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.

Crop protection

Crop protection means the management of pests, weeds or diseases in crops so that any crop damage is minimised to an acceptable level. There are a variety of ways this can be achieved, these maybe cultural, biological or chemical:

- Cultural practises of crop protection may include crop rotations, placing nets or covers over crops, or even simply ploughing to bury weeds.
- Biological practices may include planting resistant varieties, building up soil health so plants are in turn healthier and can become more tolerant to pests, encouraging greater biodiversity around farms or using known pest predators in crops to reduce pest numbers (for example ladybirds predating on greenflies).
- Chemical methods are those which use either natural or artificial chemicals to control pests.

In practice most farms will use a combination of methods to protect crops. It is our ambition to reduce chemical control methods and encourage cultural and biological practices.

The Waitrose Approach

Pesticides can be an essential tool in the economic production of food and Waitrose seeks to promote the responsible use of products that protect crops and mitigate potential health, environmental and biodiversity risks.

Waitrose seeks to minimise the risks of using pesticides within its grower base we do this by:

- Engaging and supporting our suppliers and growers

- Sharing best practises across our growing base
- Understanding which pesticides are in use on our crops
- Assessing the risk associated with those pesticides and how those risks may be removed or mitigated

Waitrose Pesticide Policy

Waitrose's policy sets out how we manage pesticides in our Fruit, Vegetables and Horticultural supply chains.

Our policy can be read [here](#).

Integrated Pest Management

Waitrose believes in promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a system of crop protection that uses an ecosystem-based strategy that uses monitoring and a wide range of control measures. We actively encourage our growers to adopt these practises that minimise pesticides by using a full range of non-chemical pest control measures. Chemical pesticides should always be the last resort and we encourage growers to use the most benign chemicals first.

Phasing out Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP's)

We are committed to phasing out Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP's) and we have engaged with academics and independent experts to assess all pesticides that could potentially be used on our crops. Depending on a range of measures, such as potential harm to human health, the environment, biodiversity or pollinators many of these pesticides have been prohibited for use on crops destined for Waitrose or restricted, requiring a pre-use risk assessment. We also monitor certain pesticides of concern with a view to restricting them should new evidence come to light about any deleterious effects.

These pesticides are listed in our Black (prohibited), Red (Restricted) or Amber (monitored) Lists. The full lists can be seen [here](#).

Monitoring of Pesticides Used Throughout our Growing Base

We work with an online platform whereby suppliers and grower must submit their proposed pesticides at the start of the season for approval. We review the pesticides submitted against our policies and any legal requirements. We ensure that for any pesticides of concern adequate risk mitigation strategies are in place.

Our online platform allows us to have visibility of all pesticides being used on our own brand fresh produce crops.

Pesticide Residue Monitoring

Waitrose operates a pesticide residue testing program in which samples of fresh produce are independently taken from our branches for laboratory analysis in order to make sure safe and legal levels of residues are maintained. This is in addition to the tests which our suppliers and growers carry out on our behalf. Waitrose has access to these tests via an online platform. The results of our tests are shared with our suppliers and growers.

From 2024 we have started a programme of independent testing of products at source directly from farms and packing facilities across the world. This will increase the number of samples being tested and give us greater visibility of potential issues around our growing areas.

The report of our pesticide residue testing and results for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 is available [here](#).

Good Agricultural Practices

Fresh produce growers supplying Waitrose must comply with certain minimum standards, helping to ensure only safe, and responsibly grown fruit and vegetables are supplied to Waitrose.

All of our UK growers must be accredited to Red Tractor and LEAF Marque Standards.

All of our growers abroad must be accredited to Global Gap and by the end of 2026 they must also be accredited to LEAF Marque Standards.