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## Taiwan

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### New MRLs for Apples

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**Report Highlights:**

A decision by the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) to establish maximum residue levels (MRLs) for eleven (11) agrochemicals on apples came under criticism after local media reported that the request for the MRLs had come from Korean authorities. In 2010, Taiwan's imports of Korean apples reached a record US\$9.6 million, but imports from Korea fell to only US\$3.5 million in 2011 after multiple MRL violations disrupted trade.

## General Information:

Recently, Taiwan media reported extensively on the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration's (TFDA) decision to establish new maximum residue levels (MRLs) for eleven (11) agrochemicals on apples. Korean authorities had petitioned for establishment of the MRLs after Korean exporters experienced repeated problems with pesticide residue violations, which disrupted shipments to Taiwan in 2011.

TFDA's decision was criticized by local media, food safety critics and consumer groups. TFDA authorities defended the decision, stressing that Taiwan routinely receives up to 1,000 MRL requests annually and that new MRLs are adopted only after thorough risk assessments, which take into consideration international standards, the acceptable daily intake and total intake of individual agrochemicals and Taiwan consumers' dietary habits. TFDA also noted that once a new MRL is established, the MRL applies to product from any source, including domestically grown and imported.

### New MRLs

Chemical Name	MRL (parts per million)
Acequinocyl	0.5
Azoxystrobin	1.0
Bifenazate	0.75
Cyflumetofen	1.0
Diflubenzuron	1.0
Dinotefuran	1.0
Fluazinam	0.5
Flufenoxuron	1.0
Lufenuron	0.5
Metconazole	0.2
Spirodiclofen	0.8

Source: TFDA

Korea applied for thirteen (13) MRLs on apples. Taiwan established four (4) of the MRLs in November 2011 and another seven (7) MRLs in June 2012. The reason that MRLs established months ago made the local press now was because a Korean apple cooperative has scheduled a big promotion campaign during the upcoming Thanksgiving weekend (November 23-24, 2012) to re-introduce the "safer" Korean apples in connection with the start of the new shipping season. The apple cooperative had invited Taiwan media to visit Korea in advance of the launch of the Taiwan promotion, and cooperative officials apparently shared the news about the new MRLs with those media representatives.

Imports of Korean apples had been placed under batch-by-batch inspection and testing for pesticide residues since February 1, 2011 following various MRL violations during that shipping season. However, Taiwan importers that subsequently met the clean-shipment threshold qualified for less stringent inspection and testing. According to the Taiwan "Regulations of Inspection of Imported Foods and Related Products", produce subject to elevated batch-by-batch inspection will only be accepted for import inspection when accompanied by a pre-shipment laboratory test report that indicates the produce is in compliance with all of Taiwan's pesticide residue standards.

The problems faced by imports of Korean apples are reflected in the following table, which offers a five-year comparison of Taiwan's imports of U.S. apples. Shipments to Taiwan declined sharply in 2011 due to the repeated MRL violations and subsequent sanctions in the form of escalating border inspection/testing and the requirement for pre-shipment testing.

**Taiwan: Imports of Apples from Korea, 2007-2011**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Volume (MT)	1,249	3,348	7,135	6,563	2,490
Value (US\$1,000)	1,426	4,119	7,897	9,689	3,459

*Source: Council of Agriculture from Customs data*

For additional information on the Taiwan market for apples, also see the following GAIN reports:

TW12038 - Taiwan Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual

TW12034 - Taiwan Implements Temporary Tariff Reduction on Fruit Imports