

# Pesticide analysis in fruit and vegetables by microflow liquid chromatography coupled to mass spectrometry

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## 1. Aim and scope

This study is aimed at the development and validation a new method to decrease matrix effects in the quantification of pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables using a microflow-liquid chromatography system coupled to a triple quadrupole mass spectrometer and an electrospray ionization source with an ESI emitter to provide a microflow rate (microflow-LC-ESI-QqQ-MS). Multiresidue method validation and quality control were carried out for 90 pesticide residues including degradation products in three commodities (tomato, pepper and orange), within the framework of european regulatory controls on pesticide residues.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Short description

The samples homogeneously crushed were extracted with QuEChERS procedure, previously published<sup>2</sup>. Blank samples were examined to confirm absence of the target pesticide residues and used for preparing matrix-matched standards. The internal standards dichlorvos-d<sup>6</sup> and malathion-d<sup>10</sup> were used to control the recovery experiments. Linuron-d<sup>6</sup> and Dimethoate-d<sup>6</sup> were used at the step of dilution and injection of the samples into the microflow-LC-MS system to test robustness of the whole analysis. The diluted extract is analysed by injecting 3 µL into the microflow-LC-ESI-QqQ-MS system.

## 3. Apparatus and consumables

- Automatic pipettes, suitable for handling volumes of 30 µL to 500 µL and 1 mL to 3 mL.
- 50 ml PTFE centrifuge tubes with screw caps
- 15 ml PTFE centrifuge tubes with screw caps
- Vortex
- Automatic axial extractor
- Centrifuge, suitable for the centrifuge tubes employed in the procedure and capable of achieving at least 3700 rpm
- Concentration workstation
- Syringes, e.g. 2 mL disposable syringes
- Syringe filters PTFE, 0.2 µm pore size
- Injection vials, 2 ml, suitable for LC auto-sampler
- Volumetric flasks

## 4. Chemicals

- Acetonitrile ultra-gradient grade
- Formic acid
- Trisodium citrate dihydrate
- Sodium chloride
- Disodium hydrogencitrate sesquihydrate
- Anhydrous magnesium sulphate
- Primary secondary amine bonded silica (PSA), bulk material
- Bondesil-C18
- Ultra-pure water
- Pesticides standards

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1. Sample preparation

The samples were homogeneously crushed and stored at 4°C before spiking and sample extraction. Samples were prepared and processed according to the SANCO Guideline for pesticide residues analysis in food<sup>1</sup>.

### 5.2. Recovery experiments for method validation

The samples employed in validation studies did not contain any of the pesticides analysed.

Individual pesticide stock solutions (1000–2000 mg/L) were prepared in acetonitrile and ethyl acetate and were stored in amber screw-capped glass vials in the dark at -20 °C.

60g of previously homogenised sample (tomato, pepper and orange) were weighed and transferred to a crystalliser, where they were fortified homogenously with the working standard solution in acetonitrile.

The validation method was performed at two fortification levels (5 and 50 µg/Kg). Five replicates were analysed at each level.

### 5.3. Extraction

1. Weigh 10 g ± 0.1 g of sample in 50 mL PTFE centrifuge tube.
2. Add 10 mL of acetonitrile and 50 µL of 10 mg/L of dichlorvos-d<sup>6</sup> and malathion-d<sup>10</sup> (internal surrogate standards)
3. Shake in automatic axial extractor for 4 minutes.

4. Add 4 g of anhydrous magnesium sulphate, 1 g of sodium chloride, 1g of trisodiumcitrate dehydrate and 0.5 g of disodium hydrogencitrate sesquihydrate.
5. Shake in automatic axial extractor for 4 minutes.
6. Centrifuge for 5 min at 3500 rpm.
7. Transfer 5 mL of supernatant into 15 mL PTFE centrifuge tube containing 750mg of anhydrous magnesium sulphate, 125 mg of PSA and 125 mg of bondesil-C18 and shake in a vortex 30 s.
8. Centrifuge for 5 min at 3500 rpm.
9. Add to the extract 50 µL of 5% formic acid in acetonitrile.
10. An aliquot is diluted 30 times with a mixture of AcN: H<sub>2</sub>O (20:80) and filtered using a 0.2 µm PTFE syringe filter.

With this treatment, 1 mL of sample extract represents 1 g of sample.

#### 5.4. Measurement

The microflow-LC-ESI-QqQ-MS system was operated in SRM (selected reaction monitoring) mode with a resolution set to unit for Q1 and Q3. The best sensitivity in SRM mode was achieved under time-scheduled conditions and with a time window of 30 s. Identification was based on the EU guideline for LC-MS/MS analysis 3: acquisition of two SRM transitions, retention time (tolerance of ±0.2 min) and compliance of the SRM ratio (relationship between the abundance of transitions selected for identification and for quantification, SRM2/SRM1 with a tolerance of ±30%). The mass transitions used are presented in Appendix I.

#### 5.5. Instrumentation and analytical conditions for the microLC- MS/MS system

##### 5.5.1. Eksigent ekspert™ microflow-LC 200 system.

- Column: Halo-C18 of 50 x 0.5 mm i.d. and 2.7µm, 90 Å particle size
- Mobile phase A: 0.1% formic acid in ultra-pure water
- Mobile phase B: acetonitrile
- Flow rate: 30 µL/min
- Injection volume: 3 µL

Mobile phase gradient for pesticides analyse in positive mode

Time [min]	Mobile phase A	Mobile phase B
0	80%	20%
1	80%	20%
10	2%	98%
13	2%	98%
14	80%	20%

### 5.5.2. 4500 QTRAP

- TEM( ESI source gas temperature): 300 °C
- GS1(Nebulizer Gas): 30psi
- GS2(Turbo Gas): 30psi
- CUR (Curtin gas): 20 psi
- IS (Ion spray voltaje): 5000v
- CAD (Collision gas): Medium
- EX: 10 psi
- CXP (Collision Cell Exit Potencial): 12 psi

Operational parameters for pesticides are presented in Appendix I.

## 6. Validation of the method

### 6.1. Recoveries and within-laboratory reproducibility

The results corresponding to the mean recovery (n=5) and within-laboratory reproducibility in terms of relative standard deviation (RSD) at both fortification levels are summarized in Appendix II. Acceptable mean recoveries are those within the range of 70-120 %, with an associated repeatability RSD < 20%.<sup>1</sup>

### 6.2. Limits of quantitation

Document N° SANCO/12495/2011 defines limit of quantitation as the lowest validated spike level meeting the method performance acceptability criteria. LOQs are summarized in Appendix II.

### 6.3. Linearity

Linearity of the systems was evaluated by assessing the signal responses of the target analytes from matrix-matched calibration solutions prepared by spiking blank extracts at eight concentration levels, from 0.16 to 13.3 µg L<sup>-1</sup>, corresponding to 5–400 µg kg<sup>-1</sup> in the sample. In almost all cases, coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was higher than 0.99. Linearity ranges for all pesticides in all matrices are summarized in Appendix II.

### 6.4. Matrix effects

Matrix effects were evaluated based on the slopes of regression lines plotted from results obtained in matrices versus standard solutions. Values of matrix effects are summarized in Appendix II.

This report aims to provide information to laboratories that analyse pesticide residues in vegetables and fruit using a micro-flow system.

## 7. References

- SANCO/12571/2013. Guidance document on analytical quality control and validation procedures for pesticide residues analysis in food and feed. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_protection\\_products/guidance\\_documents/docs/qualcontrol\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_protection_products/guidance_documents/docs/qualcontrol_en.pdf).
- EURL-FV multiresidue method using QuEChERS followed by GC-QqQ/MS/MS and LC-QqQ/MS/MS for fruits and vegetables. [http://www.crlpesticides.eu/library/docs/fv/CRLFV\\_Multiresidue\\_methods.pdf](http://www.crlpesticides.eu/library/docs/fv/CRLFV_Multiresidue_methods.pdf).
- Commission Decision 2002/657/EC of 12 August 2002 implementing Council Directive 96/23/EC establishes criteria and procedures for the validation of analytical methods to ensure the quality and comparability of analytical results generated by official laboratories. Official Journal of the European Communities L221/8, 17.8.2002.

## APPENDIX I: MASS TRANSITIONS

**Table1.** SRM transitions of identification and quantification (SRM<sub>1</sub> and SRM<sub>2</sub>). Operational parameters of the multiresidue method for pesticide residue analysis by microflowLC–ESI-QTRAP–MS/MS.

Pesticide residues	t <sub>R</sub> (min)	DP (V)	SRM <sub>1</sub>	CE1 (eV)	SRM <sub>2</sub>	CE2 (eV)
Acetamiprid	1.02	77	223.0/126.0	30	223.0/56.0	28
Azinphos-Methyl	4.15	55	318.0/132.1	21	318.0/261	8
Azoxystrobin	4.48	57	404.0/372.0	20	404.0/344.1	33
Bitertanol	4.94	60	338.0/269.1	14	338.0/99.1	24
Boscalid	4.55	105	343.0/307.0	27	343.0/140.0	24
Bromuconazole	4.24	100	378.0/159.0	40	378.0/70.0	59
Bupirimate	3.57	100	317.0/166.1	32	317.0/272.1	27
Buprofezin	4.60	62	306.0/201.0	17	306.0/116.0	23

Carbaryl	2.92	56	202.0/145.0	13	202.0/127.0	37
Carbendazim	0.45	113	192.0/160.0	26	192.0/132.0	43
Chlorpyrifos	6.92	66	352.0/200.0	28	352.0/125.0	27
Cyprodinil	3.22	130	225.6/93.1	48	225.6/108.1	33
Diazinon	5.60	102	304.8/169.2	29	304.8/153.1	28
Diclorvos-d <sub>6</sub>	2.18	66	226.8/115.0	25	226.8/83.0	37
Dicrotophos	0.49	63	238.0/112.0	17	238.0/193.1	13
Diethofencarb	4.13	61	268.0/226.1	13	268.0/180.1	25
Difenoconazole	5.44	105	406.0/251.0	35	406.0/337.0	25
Dimethoate	0.94	50	230.0/199.0	12	230.0/171.0	19
Dimethoate-d <sub>6</sub>	0.91	62	236.0/205.0	11	236.0/177.0	21
Diniconazole	4.99	85	326.0/70.0	60	326.0/159.0	45
Epoxiconazole	449	90	330.0/121.1	22	330.0/141.1	23
Ethirimol	0.48	100	210.0/140.0	28	210.0/98.0	34
Ethofenprox	8.35	60	394.0/177.1	20	394.0/359.2	15
Ethoprophos	4.43	65	243.0/131.0	27	243.0/215.0	16
Fenamidone	4.45	75	312.0/236.0	21	312.0/92.1	40
Fenarimol	4.24	110	331.0/268.0	32	331.0/259.3	35
Fenbuconazole	4.86	90	337.0/125.0	50	337.0/70.0	50
Fenhexamid	4.52	100	302.0/97.0	30	302.0/55.0	60
Fenitrothion	4.99	86	278.0/125.0	26	278.0/109.0	21
Fenpropathrin	6.92	80	350.0/125.0	21	350.0/97.1	44
Fenpropimorph	3.06	150	304.0/147.0	39	304.0/130.0	35
Fenpyroximate	7.03	110	422.0/366.0	21	422.0/215.2	34
Fenthion	5.59	80	279.0/247.0	17	279.0/169.1	23
Fenthion-Oxon	3.52	85	263.0/231.0	21	263.0/216.0	31
Fenthion-Oxonsulfone	1.31	95	295.0/217.0	25	295.0/104.0	32
Fenthion-Oxonsulfoxide	0.78	85	279.0/264.0	27	279.0/104.0	35
Fenthion-Sulfone	3.73	95	311.0/125.0	95	311.0/279.0	89
Fenthion-Sulfoxide	2.86	90	295.0/280.0	25	295.0/232.0	29
Flusilazole	4.77	97	316.0/247.0	25	316.0/165.0	39
Flutriafol	3.09	80	302.0/70.0	55	302.0/123.0	35
Fosthiazate	2.99	62	284.0/228.0	13	284.0/104.0	32
Hexaconazole	4.77	95	314.0/70.0	55	314.0/159.1	45
Imazalil	2.29	110	297.0/159.0	29	297.0/201.0	25

Imidacloprid	0.84	65	256.0/209.0	22	256.0/175.0	27
Iprodione	4.90	80	330.0/245.0	21	330.0/288.0	25
Iprovalicarb	4.33	60	321.1/119.0	30	321.1/203.1	12
Kresoxim-Methyl	5.41	64	314.0/267.0	10	314.0/282.1	11
Linuron-d <sub>6</sub>	4.05	74	255.0/160.0	26	255.0/185.0	24
Malathion-d <sub>10</sub>	4.86	76	341.0/132.0	19	341.0/100.0	37
Mandipropamid	4.67	80	412.0/328.0	20	412.0/356.0	15
Metconazole	4.90	90	320.0/70.0	65	320.0/125.0	60
Methidathion	4.06	55	303.0/145.0	14	303.0/85.0	28
Methiocarb	3.99	60	226.0/169.0	13	226.0/121.1	25
Methiocarb-Sulfone	1.34	78	258.0/201.0	12	258.0/122.0	23
Methiocarb-Sulfoxide	0.71	70	242.0/185.0	18	242.0/122.0	37
Methomyl	0.51	37	163.0/106.0	14	163.0/88.1	12
Methoxyfenozide	4.81	50	369.0/313.2	11	369.0/149.1	28
Omethoate	0.45	60	214.0/183.0	16	214.0/155.0	21
Oxadixyl	2.14	67	279.0/219.2	14	279.0/102.0	14
Oxydemeton-Methyl	0.46	48	247.0/169.0	18	247.0/105.0	17
Paclobutrazol	3.91	90	294.0/70.0	52	294.0/125.0	55
Parathion	5.59	60	292.0/236.0	20	292.0/264.1	13
Parathion-Methyl	4.58	70	264.0/232.0	23	264.0/125.0	23
Penconazole	4.78	77	284.0/70.0	42	284.0/159.0	45
Pencynuron	5.90	95	329.0/125.0	55	329.0/218.0	22
Pendimethalin	6.89	40	282.0/212.1	16	282.0/194.0	26
Phenthroate	5.65	66	321.0/163.0	15	321.0/247.0	15
Phosalone	6.04	75	368.0/182.0	23	368.0/322.1	14
Phoxim	6.01	65	299.0/129.0	16	299.0/153.1	9
Pirimicarb	0.52	70	239.0/182.1	21	239.0/72.1	39
Pirimiphos-Methyl	5.28	110	306.0/164.1	30	306.0/108.1	43
Prochloraz	3.87	53	376.0/308.0	16	376.0/266.0	23
Propargite	7.29	60	368.0/231.0	15	368.0/175.0	21
Propiconazole	5.01	100	342.0/159.0	41	342.0/69.0	35
Propoxur	2.48	50	210.0/168.0	11	210.0/111.1	20
Propyzamide	4.51	70	256.0/190.0	21	256.0/173.0	33
Prothiofos	7.92	80	344.8/241.0	25	344.8/269.0	16
Pyraclostrobin	5.79	64	388.0/194.0	16	388.0/164.0	24

Pyrethrins	7.32	62	329.0/161.0	13	329.0/143.0	23
Pyridaben	7.57	90	365.1/309.0	19	365.1/147.0	35
Pyrimethanil	2.04	135	200.0/107.1	32	200.0/168.1	40
Pyriproxyfen	6.71	70	322.0/96.0	20	322.0/227.0	20
Quinoxyfen	5.99	120	308.0/197.0	44	308.0/272.1	40
Rotenone	5.04	120	395.0/213.0	35	395.0/192.1	36
Tebuconazole	4.63	96	308.0/70.1	51	308.0/125.0	53
Tebufenpyrad	6.23	110	334.0/145.0	35	334.0/117.0	60
Tetraconazole	4.68	100	372.0/159.0	43	372.0/70.0	65
Thiodicarb	2.81	63	355.0/88.0	27	355.0/108.0	21
Thiophanate-Methyl	2.50	75	343.0/151.0	27	343.0/311.0	16
Tolclofos-Methyl	5.92	84	301.0/125.0	26	301.0/269.0	22
Triadimefon	4.49	70	294.0/197.0	22	294.0/225.1	18
Triadimenol	3.95	45	296.0/70.0	38	296.0/227.0	13
Triticonazole	4.06	80	318.0/70.0	55	318.0/125.0	50
Zoxamide	5.64	107	336.0/187.0	31	336.0/204.0	23

**APPENDIX II: VALIDATION RESULTS**

**Table 2.** Validation of microflow-LC-ESI-QTRAP-MS based method: linearity, concentration range, matrix effect (ME) and recovery for the selected matrices studied.

Pesticide residues	Recovery (%)		Correlation coefficient		Linear range		ME (%)		LOQ ( $\mu\text{gKg}^{-1}$ )				
	5 $\mu\text{gKg}^{-1}$ , 50 $\mu\text{gKg}^{-1}$	(R2)	( $\mu\text{gKg}^{-1}$ )	( $\mu\text{gKg}^{-1}$ )	Tomato	Pepper	Orange	Tomato	Pepper	Orange	Tomato	Pepper	Orange
Acetamiprid	92;86	92;96	102;106	0.9993	0.9971	0.9992	5-400	5-400	-7	6	-1	5	5
Azinphos-Methyl	88;103	103;121	121;101	0.9964	0.9906	0.9956	10-400	5-400	15	12	15	5	5
Azoxystrobin	102;103	104;95	119;120	0.9990	0.9984	0.9978	5-400	5-400	-10	8	-2	5	5
Biteranol	111;104	112;94	120;114	0.9980	0.9969	0.9950	5-400	5-400	-20	-16	-14	5	5
Boscalid	94;92	96;100	106;106	0.9991	0.9964	0.9981	5-400	5-400	-6	-1	3	5	5
Bromuconazole	109;87	94;101	94;120	0.9959	0.9964	0.9991	5-400	5-400	7	15	-8	5	5
Bupirimate	110;93	107;98	119;120	0.9991	0.9970	0.9960	5-400	5-400	-5	0	-7	5	5
Buprofezin	96;73	89;85	101;106	0.9969	0.9969	0.9983	5-400	5-400	1	9	16	5	5
Carbaryl	108;102	105;103	106;105	0.9983	0.9961	0.9987	5-400	5-400	-1	12	6	5	5
Carbendazim	102;93	120;120	81;81	0.9994	0.9958	0.9990	5-400	5-400	-18	5	-23	5	5
Chlorpyrifos	95;89	101;90	120;112	0.9967	0.9939	0.9837	5-400	5-400	-3	-3	-6	5	5
Cyprodinil	83;92	92;88	120;104	0.9977	0.9997	0.9902	5-400	5-400	-8	8	-40	5	5
Diazinon	93;78	94;94	93;103	0.9992	0.9983	0.9968	5-400	5-400	-8	-5	-7	5	5



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	72;76	71;69	70;65	0.9993	0.9998	0.9929	5-400	5-400	-2	-8	-9	5	5	5
<b>Fenthion-Oxonsulfone</b>														
<b>Fenthion-Oxonsulfone</b>	78;71	75;81	81;80	0.9976	0.9991	0.9967	5-400	5-400	-3	-4	-12	5	5	5
<b>Fenthion-Sulfone</b>	75;69	76;79	79;80	0.9931	0.9986	0.9943	5-400	5-400	-6	-4	-14	5	5	5
<b>Fenthion-Sulfoxide</b>	76;63	69;71	65;72	0.9997	0.9991	0.9911	5-400	5-400	-9	-10	-15	5	5	5
<b>Flusilazole</b>	99;100	94;98	113;116	0.9984	0.9988	0.9969	5-400	5-400	-8	0	0	5	5	5
<b>Flutriafol</b>	98;99	101;100	112;106	0.9991	0.9959	0.9986	5-400	5-400	-9	1	4	5	5	5
<b>Fosthiazate</b>	101;98	108;101	112;113	0.9992	0.9961	0.9989	5-400	5-400	-2	8	10	5	5	5
<b>Hexaconazole</b>	83;102	118;94	108;114	0.9974	0.9986	0.9965	5-400	5-400	-4	4	9	5	5	5
<b>Imazalil</b>	78;81	81;81	105;102	0.9975	0.9986	0.9992	5-400	5-400	8	11	15	5	5	5
<b>Imidacloprid</b>	101;90	105;108	120;120	0.9988	0.9964	0.9935	5-400	5-400	-7	4	12	5	5	5
<b>Iprodione</b>	n.d.;104	n.d.;98	n.d.;107	0.9992	0.9941	0.9989	50-400	50-400	-1	-3	-3	50	50	50
<b>Iprovalicarb</b>	111;93	109;99	112;119	0.9990	0.9948	0.9993	5-400	5-400	-2	15	12	5	5	5
<b>Kresoxim-Methyl</b>	98;96	116;104	114;113	0.9992	0.9934	0.9988	5-400	5-400	1	16	14	5	5	5
<b>Mandipropamid</b>	103;98	115;98	102;113	0.9992	0.9955	0.9993	5-400	5-400	-5	8	9	5	5	5
<b>Metconazole</b>	103;95	102;99	108;100	0.9983	0.9991	0.9979	5-400	5-400	-5	3	3	5	5	5
<b>Methidathion</b>	89;120	120;120	120;113	0.9955	0.9950	0.9929	5-400	5-400	-7	-18	-57	5	5	5
<b>Methiocarb</b>	103;98	103;100	115;112	0.9993	0.9966	0.9987	5-400	5-400	-2	2	-3	5	5	5





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<b>Thiophanate-Methyl</b>	84;87	54;59	97;104	0.9990	0.9969	0.9987	5-400	50-400	5-400	12
<b>Tolclofos-Methyl</b>	91;88	112;106	75;119	0.9938	0.9993	0.9949	5-400	5-400	5-400	1
<b>Triadimenol</b>	99;98	94;104	116;110	0.9971	0.9935	0.9994	5-400	5-400	5-400	-4
<b>Triadimenol</b>	95;94	91;99	96;90	0.9992	0.9986	0.9965	5-400	5-400	5-400	-2
<b>Triticonazole</b>	113;98	106;97	112;107	0.9979	0.9948	0.9946	5-400	5-400	5-400	-6
<b>Zoxamide</b>	109;93	96;98	113;110	0.9973	0.9958	0.9992	5-400	5-400	5-400	-6

ME (%) = ((slope matrix/slope solvent)-1)×100