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Health and biodiversity

Key theme: No to pesticides –

No to ‘forever chemicals’

Thanks to partnerships with European colleagues, the issues of ‘pesticide use and exposure’ and ‘forever chemicals’ took centre stage in 2025, particularly through a series of food analyses.

Mouvement Ecologique wants to show just how important it is to take action today! It is not just a matter of protecting biodiversity, but also our health.

Taking action today also means avoiding unmanageable burdens in the future.

FOOD CONTAMINATION BY PESTICIDES – EVEN ONE PESTICIDE IS TOO MANY!

The Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration (ALVA) regularly publishes food analyses aimed at detecting pesticide residues. In 2022, 608 food samples from Luxembourg, the EU and third countries were tested (fruit, vegetables, cereals, spices, herbs, tea, oilseeds, nuts, tubers and wine). As no more recent data was available and the results are extremely revealing, Mouvement Ecologique published a detailed analysis of these findings in February 2025. It was entitled: *'Official analyses by the Ministry of Agriculture show: 50% of foodstuffs tested are contaminated with pesticides – when will the government take action?'*



These official samples demonstrated strikingly how common pesticide residues are in food produced using conventional farming methods (in contrast to food produced using organic farming methods). In fact, only around half of the samples were completely free of pesticide residues – 5.8% of the samples exceeded the legal maximum residue limits and were partially withdrawn from sale. Organic products contained significantly fewer residues than those from conventional farming.

It was particularly worrying to note that many foods were contaminated by several pesticides at once, known as 'pesticide cocktails'.

Mouvement Ecologique regretted that ALVA had not itself highlighted this key point in its report.

Minister Martine Hansen responded to Mouvement Ecologique's statement in the press, describing the report as "misleading" and downplayed the risks by citing legal limits and the selection of samples examined.

Mouvement Ecologique explicitly rejected this interpretation. In light of the growing body of scientific evidence demonstrating the clear threat that pesticides pose to nature and health, it is incumbent upon policymakers to respond more consistently and provide better information. When a food product contains several pesticides, one must not pretend that everything is fine simply because there are no legal limits for such mixtures. The Ministry must also be far more consistent in informing the public that organic food products are significantly less contaminated.

Although a direct exchange with the Minister took place a few weeks later, from the Mouvement Écologique's perspective, little progress has been made.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH THE ALVA

The issue of pesticide residues was addressed in the autumn during a fruitful exchange with the Luxembourg Administration for Veterinary and Food Affairs (ALVA).

A factual discussion took place regarding ALVA's remit and the EU requirements for such analyses. ALVA emphasised its neutrality on this matter, as well as the high standards of professional and scientific quality required for the analyses and their complexity.

At the same time, Mouvement Ecologique emphasised the importance of presenting these analyses in a way that is easily understandable to interested members of the public and organisations, whilst also objectively highlighting the differences in contamination levels between organically and conventionally farmed food. Furthermore, in anticipation of various upcoming European requirements in Luxembourg, the Ministry should promote the precautionary principle much more systematically.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOTTLE

The rapid increase in trans-fatty acid contamination in the EU



PERFLUORINATED CHEMICALS (PFCs) AND FOODSTUFFS: A THREAT TO HEALTH AND NATURE – POLICY MUST ACT

In 2025, the actions of the Ecological Movement have been highly consistent in drawing attention to the growing contamination of nature and food by TFA (trifluoroacetic acid), an extremely persistent chemical. The primary aim is to urge policymakers to take action against the growing accumulation of this highly polluting substance, which originates largely from agricultural pesticides. At the same time, the aim is to raise public awareness of this issue.

- **‘Message from the Bottle’: Evidence of increasing TFA contamination in wine**

As part of its collaboration with Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe), Mouvement Écologique published new analyses in April on the contamination of agricultural products by trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), a ‘forever chemical’. The study focused on wine, mainly due to its long shelf life, which allowed researchers to check whether TFA contamination had increased over recent decades. Unfortunately, this was the case.

These findings confirm studies conducted in 2024 on TFA contamination of groundwater, surface water, drinking water and mineral water. Wine is representative of agricultural products in general and shows that TFA accumulates in plants, thereby entering the food chain.

Although it was emphasised that there is no immediate cause for alarm, the analyses highlight the urgency of taking action: setting limit values, reducing TFA releases into the environment and raising public awareness to minimise the ingestion of this ‘forever chemical’ through food.

- **‘Forever Chemicals’ in the food chain – cereals are also contaminated**

Following the study on TFA in wine, a new pan-European campaign has been launched with PAN-Europe. The new analyses have shown that TFA, a ‘forever chemical’, is also widespread in everyday cereal products – including in Luxembourg (bread, pasta, flour). The concentrations measured are on average 100 times higher than the levels previously found in drinking water.

The report clearly shows that food is a major route of exposure to TFA. At the same time, adequate limits are lacking, as policymakers and the scientific community have largely ignored this molecule for decades.

As PFAS are potentially harmful to health and accumulate in the environment, PAN Europe and its member organisations, including Mouvement Écologique, have called for immediate action: the introduction of precautionary limits and comprehensive strategies to reduce PFAS contamination in food and the environment.

To help the public, Mouvement Écologique has also made available on its website a list of alternatives to PFAS for everyday use.

- **Open letter on the ban on PFAS pesticides**

On 3 July 2025, Mouvement Écologique sent an open letter to the Minister for Agriculture, Martine Hansen, and the Minister for Health, Martine Deprez, as well as an appeal to Luxembourg’s MEPs. It demanded that the government launch a campaign at national and European level in favour of a ban on pesticides containing PFAS.

Mouvement Écologique urged Luxembourg to support the non-renewal of the authorisation for the active substance flutolanil at European level and, at the same time, to ban pesticides containing PFAS at national level in order to better protect the environment and public health.





- **Conference on PFAS contamination in food:**
"The bath is overflowing, we must turn off the PFAS tap!"

In November, Mouvement Écologique organised a well-attended conference at the Oeko-Zentrum Pafendall on the theme *"Alarming food contamination by 'Forever Chemicals' (PFAS)"*. Around 70 participants from civil society, as well as government departments, academia and the political sphere, attended the presentation by Kildine Le Proux de La Rivière, a chemical engineer and doctor of pharmacy with the French NGO Générations Futures.

The speaker clearly explained what PFAS are – extremely stable and persistent chemicals – and why they pose a major challenge to the environment and health.

Particular emphasis was placed on the urgency of taking action: even small amounts of food, such as a single egg, can cause children to exceed the maximum weekly limits for PFAS. The speaker cited existing examples within the EU, such as Denmark and France, which regulate products containing PFAS, and called on Luxembourg to take proactive action as well.

The event highlighted that whilst consumers can take protective measures by choosing organic products and PFAS-free consumption habits, real change must come from regulation and legal bans aimed at ending the release of PFAS into the environment. The conference was filmed and made available on the website.

EU-WIDE ACTION AGAINST THE USE OF PESTICIDES

Mouvement Écologique has also been involved in various initiatives at European level:

- **Joint call for stricter pesticide regulations:** in October, alongside 137 environmental organisations, Mouvement Écologique signed a letter addressed to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. The aim was to strengthen European legislation on pesticides and prevent dangerous transition periods that would allow the temporary use of banned substances.
- **Stop the 'omnibus' deregulation:** in December, alongside natur& Umwelt, Greenpeace and other NGOs, Mouvement Écologique called on the European Commission and national ministries to put an end to deregulation proposals in the food and feed sector, which would significantly weaken protection against pesticides.
- **Pesticide reduction and roadmap:** in January 2025, in collaboration with more than 85 international organisations, a roadmap was drawn up for a phased-out of pesticides, which includes the consistent implementation of existing European regulations and practical measures for farmers.