

**Some key activities of the
WHO Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases**

1) Safety assessment of agricultural pesticides

The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) performs toxicological and residue evaluations of agricultural pesticides. To date over 250 pesticides have been evaluated and safe intake levels established. For further information please refer to the website: <http://www.who.int/ipcs/food/jmpr/en/index.html>

2) Specifications of pesticide preparations

WHO establishes and publishes specifications for technical material and related formulations of public health pesticides with the objective that these specifications may be used to provide an international point of reference against which products can be judged either for regulatory purposes or in commercial dealings.

For further information please refer to the website: <http://www.who.int/whopes/quality/en/>

3) International standards for pesticide residues in food commodities (maximum residue limits)

Based on recommendations of JMPR the Codex Alimentarius Commission recommends maximum residue limits (MRLs) for specific crop/pesticide combinations. To date appr. 3000 MRLs have been established. For further information please refer to the website: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/mrls/pestdes/jsp/pest_g-e.jsp

4) Assessment of the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases from parasitic, enteric and chemical causes

The WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases brings together a wide range of multi-sectoral experts, including agricultural and health sectors to provide a thorough epidemiological assessment and communication of foodborne risks through:

a) a Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) which will assemble, appraise and report on burden of foodborne disease estimates;

b) in-depth country studies which will supplement the work of FERG and enable countries to conduct their own burden of disease studies.

FERG is mainly concerned with human health burden but will also examine animal health burden in order to project to the human population where appropriate. The group will report on the global burden of foodborne disease by 2011. For further information please refer to the website:
http://www.who.int/foodsafety/foodborne_disease/ferg