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PRESS RELEASE

PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL EXPLORATORY CAMPAIGN TO MEASURE PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN AMBIENT AIR

ANSES, INERIS – as a member of the Central Laboratory for Air Quality Monitoring (LCSQA) – and the network of approved air quality monitoring associations (AASQAs) coordinated by ATMO France, are today publishing the results of a campaign to measure pesticide residues in air, carried out from June 2018 to June 2019. During this campaign, 75 substances were measured using a harmonised protocol on 50 sites covering a wide range of contexts throughout France (metropolitan and overseas). Approximately 100,000 validated data were collected and 1,800 corresponding samples were analysed, helping to build the data foundation required to improve knowledge of pesticide residues in ambient air, and thus better evaluate exposure in the general population. Ultimately, this campaign will help devise the French strategy for monitoring pesticides in ambient air.

Over the course of one year, 100,000 data were collected, 1,800 samples were analysed and 75 substances were measured in 50 sites across the country.

This national large-scale campaign launched in June 2018 involved taking measurements for 75 substances over the same year on 50 sites using a newly harmonised protocol.

The target substances are used in plant protection products, biocides, veterinary medicinal products and antiparasitic drugs for human use. They were prioritised by ANSES on the basis of their hazard characteristics and criteria for use, emission and persistence in air.

The 50 sampling sites were distributed across all regions and accounted for the different types of residential areas (50% urban/suburban and 50% rural sites) and agricultural areas (26% arable farming, 18% wine-growing, 20% tree-growing, 10% market gardening and 6% livestock sites, and 20% sites without a dominant agricultural profile).

The 100,000 data from this campaign were entered into the national air quality database "GEOD'AIR".

These data were used to create an initial annual national snapshot of the concentration levels of pesticide residues in ambient air with regard to quantitative criteria such as frequency of quantification, and the orders of magnitude and statistical distributions of the concentrations encountered.

The study showed that some substances were predominantly associated with certain agricultural uses despite also being present in other profiles.

Concerning the different types of sites – rural, suburban and urban – the number of observed substances for each type was notably different for overseas sites, whereas the difference in distribution was not as marked for metropolitan

sites. The changes in concentrations over time were generally consistent with the usual treatment periods known in metropolitan France.

On the basis of this robust data foundation, ANSES was able to give an initial interpretation of health impacts according to the results of this campaign. The CNEP results are published on the websites of the LCSQA¹ and ANSES². Beyond these findings and the prospects for further studies based on these data, the large amount of metrological work carried out in support of the campaign will be an asset for revising the French standards on the sampling and analysis of pesticides in air.

Press liaison:

ANSES: presse@anses.fr – +33 (0)1 49 77 80

INERIS: karine.grimault@ineris.fr – +33 (0)6 49 33 49 60

¹ Data use report (in French): <https://www.lcsqa.org/fr/rapport/resultats-de-la-campagne-nationale-exploratoire-de-mesure-des-residus-de-pesticides-dans>

² Report on the interpretation of health impacts (in French):
<https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/AIR2020SA0030Ra.pdf>