



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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## Press Statement

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### **CAP: Pesticides tainted vegetables and rice in the market**

The Consumers Association of Penang calls for consumers to be cautious of the high amount of pesticides detected in the vegetables and rice sold in the market.

In the study, a total of 112 samples of vegetables and 20 samples of rice were tested for the presence of pesticides. Out of which 98 samples or 87.5% of vegetables and 11 samples or 55% of rice contained pesticides.

Samples were purchased from various outlets such as supermarkets, hypermarkets, wet markets, mini markets and retail shops in Penang. It was then tested for pesticides in Korea.

The study was done with the assistance of Wonjin Institute for Occupational and Environmental Health (WIOEH), with support from the Financial Industry Public Interest Foundation (FIPIF), Korea.

Most of the vegetables tested were from the farms in Ara Kuda which is the main vegetable growing area in Penang. Vegetables grown in this area are also supplied to the surrounding states of Kedah, Perlis and Perak.

From the results, it was found that excessively high amounts of pesticides are being used in the vegetables tested. Besides, it was found that there were pesticides that are banned by EU countries used in Malaysia. What is most shocking was the presence of up to 35 compounds in a single vegetable.

Presently in Malaysia legislation pertaining to pesticide residue in crops is under the Sixteenth Schedule (Regulation 41) of the Food Regulation 1985. Only the pesticides mentioned in the Schedule (together with its MRL) are allowed to be present in the respective crops.

Besides using excessive pesticides farmers are using pesticides that are banned or not allowed to be present in it. The results revealed that there were a number of crops found to contain pesticides that are not allowed to be present in it. For example, the pesticide Abamectin which is only allowed to be used in fruits such as watermelon, cucumber and tomato, was found in celery and spring onion. Carbofuran which is allowed only in rice was found in some leafy vegetables. (Carbofuran will be banned from May 2023). The samples were also found to contain insecticides such as Malathion and Metaflumizone.

Malaysian consumers are unaware of the extent and types of pesticides used on the local agricultural produce as there has not been much publicity on it. However, there are cases where Malaysian vegetables are sometimes rejected overseas due to the high pesticide content.

The study also revealed that our government encourages the use of pesticides as farmers are given financial aid to purchase them. Besides illegal pesticides are also available to farmers. It was also found that many farmers are unaware of the dangers of pesticides and do not practice the required safety procedure such as the wearing of

protective safety gear. Normally foreigners who are not trained in the procedure are paid to apply the pesticides. We also found that there is no proper storage place for keeping the pesticides. Sometimes it is kept in the same storeroom with tools and food. Empty pesticide containers are being disposed of at random even though there are some places that have been designated for them.

Given the above situation, the Consumers Association of Penang calls to the authorities to:

- Regularly conduct tests on food items in the market for pesticide levels.
- Publicise the results so that consumers can avoid the food items that were found to contain pesticides.
- Strictly enforce the Sixteenth Schedule (Regulation 41) of the Food Regulation 1985
- Enforce and monitor good farming practices
- Conduct education programs for farmers to educate them on the hazards of pesticide use.

Meanwhile, consumers are advised to demand for better food production practices through their power of consumption.

Where CAP is concerned we are encouraging and educating consumers to grow their own organic vegetables.

**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers Association of Penang**