

# Wimbledon 2008: Tennis fans warned of strawberry pesticides

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**Tennis fans enjoying strawberries at Wimbledon have been warned to take heed after a Government study showed nine out of 10 of the fruit nationwide was covered in pesticides.**

The samples under scrutiny were taken from national retailers and pick-your-own farms, and almost all of them contained traces of chemicals.

Although the compounds were not dangerous, anti-pesticide campaigners said the results left a "sour taste" in the mouth.

The report, published by the Pesticides Safety Directorate which is part of the Health and Safety Executive, found 80 per cent of the fruit tested positive for more than one chemical, but the organic variety contained none.

Emma Hockridge, from the Soil Association, said: "Strawberries are one of the British summer's most anticipated seasonal treats.

"But these findings - that most non-organic strawberries are tainted with multiple pesticides - leave a sour taste.

"There is compelling evidence emerging that the combined effect of pesticides, even at minuscule levels, is more significant than previously realised, especially as several of the pesticides found have been proven to have serious health implications.

"Fortunately people can enjoy this traditional, British summer treat without worrying about unwanted pesticides by choosing organic strawberries."

Ruth Beckmann, from Pesticides Action Network, said the level of contamination was "extremely high".

"Strawberries are one of the more frequently contaminated foods but we would expect traces of pesticides in 30 to 40 per cent of them, not 90 per cent," she said.

"That is excessive, and we still do not know the full facts about the effects these pesticides may have over a lifetime."

Strawberries are synonymous with Wimbledon and more than 28,000 kilogrammes are consumed in the fortnight.

There was protest earlier in the week after the price of a punnet at the competition rose from £2 to £2.25 after a price freeze for five years.

Story from Telegraph News:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2188296/Wimbledon-2008-Tennis-fans-warned-of-strawberry-pesticides.html>

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