

A Greek produce industry association has slammed Greenpeace for misrepresenting the results of residue samples on fruit and vegetables. 

Association of Greek Export and Consignment Enterprises for Fruits, Vegetables and Juices "Incofruit" president George Frangistas, told [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com) careful analysis of the [Greenpeace report](#) showed just one potato in 24 produce samples had excess pesticide residues.

"They ignored the 23 negative results, focusing on the one result, putting out some hyperactive statement saying that Greek fruit is dangerous - the report is biased, it's not fair," said the representative, who is also managing director of exporter Gefra.

"Greenpeace blew it out of proportion basically and that's what we wanted to clarify and put back in place."

He highlighted that Greek authorities regularly tested fruits and vegetables for chemical residue levels with security and control systems in place.

"There are several factors that come into play. First of all, I think in all honesty the biggest muscle comes from the simple fact that there's no money, so growers can simply not overspray. They have to put the bare minimum simply because they cannot afford to do more.

"But on a more scientific or commercial point of view, I can tell you that all German, Dutch and Scandinavian retailers have been demanding and expecting extremely low residues.

"You have no possibility for the growers to bend those rules because they cannot do so anyway; everyone is asking for certified fruit one way or another."

He said the report was also unclear about where the offending potato came from.

"The potato most probably in this period is local but it could be from some other country."

On a more positive note, Frangistas noted the Greek produce industry had recorded continuous growth in exports overall in the last three years.

"That's a 22% increase in volume and a 26% increase in value. In fact, the first two months of 2013 seem to be the five-year high for that period," he said.

"I suppose there are a combination of reasons for that. There was slightly less citrus in the

market this past winter with a bit less out of Spain, Greece and Turkey, and that helped with exports; there was price pressure."

He added there was good development in former Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries for stonefruit, while bilateral agreements with a few Asian countries have been positive for kiwifruit exports.

"Overall it has been a good past three years despite the very difficult local situation."

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