CAN OCCURRENCE OF PESTICIDE METABOLITES DETECTED IN CROPS PROVIDE THE EVIDENCE ON ILLEGAL PRACTICES IN ORGANIC FARMING?

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Abstract

 Modern pesticides rapidly degrade after their application due to both physicochemical factors and through biotransformation. Consequently, pesticide residues in samples might 14 be either undetectable or detected at low concentrations (\leq 10 μ g/kg). Under such conditions, a monitoring of pesticide metabolites in samples might be a conceivable solution enabling the documentation of earlier pesticide use. Analysis of metabolites might pose analytical challenges, because pesticide degradation leads to the production of a number of metabolites, differing somewhat in their structure and polarity. This study was focused on the determination of pesticide residues and their metabolites in samples of grapevine and wine, using ultra-high-performance liquid chromatography coupled with high-resolution mass spectrometry, with the objective of supporting the possibility of the verification of the method of farming. It documents the identification of pesticide metabolites commonly used in conventional farming and provides a characterization of pesticide degradation during grapevine growth, maturation and during the wine-making process.

Keywords

pesticide metabolites, pesticide residues, grapevine, organic farming, UHPLC-HRMS(/MS)

1. INTRODUCTION

 The market of organic products is continuously growing in all EU member states, including the Czech Republic. Besides the concern about the impact of conventional farming practices on the environment, consumers´ purchase of organic foods is motivated by various beliefs including that they are safer, healthier and taste better. Although it is rather difficult to provide clear evidence of the last two features, for some consumers the major expectation is the absence of synthetic pesticides, which are perceived as a serious health risk. It is worth noting that the incidence of pesticide residues in organic food is generally low. For instance, the recent European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report shows that 83.1 % of organic food produced in 2016 in EU countries was free of quantifiable residues, while it was only 53.3 % 38 in the case of conventional foods. $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ Only a few substances (listed in Annex II of the 39 Commission Regulation (EC) No $889/2008$ $889/2008$ $889/2008$ ² are permitted, but the use of synthetic pesticides is one of the restrictions applied in organic farming (Council Regulation (EC) No 41 8[3](#page-21-0)4/2007).³ Nevertheless, in some cases, contamination can be detected by current highly sensitive methods. In some cases, when applied in a conventional field, pesticides can drift through the air to a neighboring organic farm, leaving traces on the food crops. Similarly, some contamination may occur during transportation or storage of organic foods, if they are not carefully separated from conventional food items. The common practice of food inspection authorities or certification bodies is to tolerate residues at or below the level 0.01 mg/kg. However, when a rapidly degrading pesticide is employed in the pre-harvest period, no or very low residues can be detected at harvest time. Therefore, the unambiguous identification of such an illegal practice is fairly complicated. Laboratory analysis aimed at the control of compliance with legislation typically targets only compounds 51 that are included in the definitions of maximum residue level (MRL[\)](#page-21-1). These mostly involve

 merely the parent pesticides and, only in limited cases, certain toxicologically relevant metabolites. However, dissipation of modern pesticides after application leaves a number of various (nontoxic) metabolites in treated plants. These metabolites can be considered, in some respect, as ´markers´ of earlier unauthorized pesticide usage. Therefore, documentation of their presence at higher concentrations in a product labeled as ´organic´ may support identification of fraud even in the case when a parent pesticide is not detectable. (Bio)transformation of pesticides in plants has been a subject of many studies and has to be described in documentation submitted on the occasion of pesticide 60 preparation registration.^{[5](#page-21-2)} In general terms, in Phase I, oxidation and hydrolysis and sometimes also reduction of the parent molecules take place. In Phase II, these products undergo conjugation with polar molecules such as sugars, amino acids or glutathione. In some cases, such conjugates occur directly with parent compounds. In Phase III, conversion 64 of Phase II metabolites into (nontoxic) 2^0 conjugates takes place; metabolites move to the 5 vacuole for storage or are incorporated into the cell wall.⁶

 Analysis of pesticide metabolites is fairly challenging for several reasons: (i) their concentration might be very low, thus difficult to detect; as several metabolites originate from a parent pesticide; (ii) the dynamics of the origin of individual metabolites in specific crops are unknown, thus multiple metabolites should be always targeted; (iii) most of these metabolites are somewhat more polar compared to the parent compound, thus cannot be directly incorporated into common multiresidue methods, so new analytical procedures have to be developed and implemented; (iv) analytical standards are commercially available for only a few metabolites, thus accurate quantification of most of them is practically impossible.

 As mentioned above, the popularity of organic products is rapidly growing. This also applies in the case of ´organic wines´ offered on the Czech market. Like other organic farm products, these wines are also regularly controlled for quality and authenticity. While the procedures for the identification of a geographic origin, based on a combined analysis of elemental and isotopic composition, are available in control laboratories, the methodology is still missing for the reliable authentication of farming practice. To investigate the possibility of using pesticide metabolites as markers of unauthorized pesticide usage, we performed a pilot study within which a number of samples was collected from an experimental vineyard where grapevine plants were treated with common fungicides according to an agreed treatment plan. Using ultra-high-performance liquid chromatography coupled with high-resolution mass spectrometry (UHPLC-HRMS(/MS)), the dynamics of parent compounds' dissipation and the origin of the relevant metabolites were monitored. The transfer of these compounds into wine was also studied. Several studies realized earlier by other authors documented the fate of pesticides during wine making process, the impact of various procedures such as 89 filtration, clarification and maceration was described in detail. $\frac{7-8}{2}$ $\frac{7-8}{2}$ $\frac{7-8}{2}$ Optimization of the analytical strategy for the extraction of metabolites formed an integral part of this study.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

 Certified standards of pesticides (dimethomorph, fenhexamid, iprovalicarb, metrafenone, pyraclostrobin, quinoxyfen, spiroxamine, tebuconazole and triadimenol) were purchased 95 from Dr. Ehrenstorfer GmbH (Augsburg, Germany), Honeywell Fluka™ or Honeywell Riedel-96 de HaenTM (both Seelze, Germany). The purity of standards was in the range of 98-99.9 %. The internal standards for triphenyl phosphate (TPP) and nicarbazin were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich [\(St. Louis, Missouri, USA\)](https://www.google.cz/search?q=St.+Louis&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LUz9U3sLC0SK5U4gAxzcoryrW0spOt9POL0hPzMqsSSzLz81A4VhmpiSmFpYlFJalFxQDMHhGVQwAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjT9bq-h4veAhUIyqQKHV-6BqQQmxMoATARegQICBAZ). Individual pesticides' stock solutions were prepared

 in pure methanol, acetonitrile or acetone containing 1 % formic acid (*v/v*), depending on the solubility of the specific pesticide. A composite stock standard in acetonitrile was prepared 101 at 50 000 ng⋅mL⁻¹ from stock solutions and was stored at −18 °C. The working standard 102 mixtures (20-2000 ng⋅mL⁻¹) used for matrix-matched calibration were prepared from stock solution by further dilution with acetonitrile.

 HPLC-grade acetonitrile, LC–MS-grade formic acid, ammonium formate and ammonium acetate were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich. Methanol was obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). Acetone and sodium chloride were obtained from Penta (Chrudim, Czech 107 Republic). Anhydrous magnesium sulfate was obtained from Honeywell Fluka™. Deionised water (18 MΩ) was produced, using a Millipore Milli-Q system (Bedford, USA).

2.2. Samples

 All samples tested in this study were collected from the vineyard located at the Oblekovice experimental station in the Czech Republic (South Moravian Region). The Ryzlink rynsky (Riesling) grapevine cultivar, treated with various fungicides was used for the experiments. The schedule of treatment and a list of applied Plant Protection Products (PPP) and other preparations, together with the sampling intervals of tested materials, are documented in **[Table 1](#page-25-0)**. Treatments were performed at the doses recommended by the manufacturers.

 Vine leaves were sampled from May to October (20-week period), wine grapes were sampled during the ripening period from September to October (5 weeks). Both types of samples were collected every 6-8 days (see **[Table 1](#page-25-0)**).

 Grapes were harvested after the pre-harvest interval (given on a label of PPP) of the particular pesticide had elapsed. Thereafter, the grapes were processed into a white wine. The wine-making process involved the following steps: (*i*) crushing and pressing of grapes into a juice; (*ii*) clarification of juice (separation of lees); (*iii*) fermentation of must;

 (*iv*) racking; (*v*) fining of young wine; (*vi*) filtration and (*vii*) bottling of wine. During the wine production, sampling was done after crushing and pressing of the grapes (juice), after racking (clarified juice), during the alcoholic fermentation (musts), after racking (young wine and lees), and after bottling (white wine). During the alcoholic fermentation, samples of musts were collected at 6- to 14-day intervals. The amount of an individual sample was 100- 200 g and 200-250 mL respectively. All samples were stored at -18 °C in polyethylene bags or in plastic bottles. The list of samples is shown in **[Table 1](#page-25-0)**.

2.3. Sample preparation

 Prior to the analysis, solid samples (vine leaves and wine grapes) were homogenized, using a laboratory blender. Liquid samples (musts and wines) were mixed thoroughly. Parent pesticides were determined, using an ISO 17025 accredited method routinely used in our laboratory. A new extraction/detection method had to be implemented for the analysis of metabolites.

2.3.1. Extraction of parent pesticide residues

 The extraction procedure was based on the QuEChERS method. 2.5 g of homogenized vine leaves were weighed into a 50-mL centrifugation tube, followed by the addition of 10 mL of water containing 1 % (*v/v*) of formic acid. The matrix was allowed to soak for 20 min. In the case of wine grapes/wine, 10 g of previously homogenized samples was weighed into a 50- mL plastic centrifuge tube, without water addition. Subsequently, 10 mL of acetonitrile was added and the tube was vigorously shaken for 2 min. In the next step, 1 g of NaCl and 4 g of 143 MgSO₄ were added and the shaking process was repeated for 1 min. Then 100 μ L of mixture 144 of TPP and nicarbazin (5 μg⋅mL⁻¹) as an internal standard was added and the tubes were centrifuged for 5 min at 11 200 rcf. An aliquot of the supernatant was transferred into a vial.

 In the case of wine samples, the volume of the extract (top organic layer) was affected by the ethanol naturally present in wines (11-15 vol.%). To compensate for this effect, an addition of internal standards was used.

2.3.2. Extraction of pesticide metabolites

 Four alternative sample preparation procedures were tested for the extraction of pesticide metabolites from the experimental samples.

Procedure A

 The same extraction procedure based on the modified QuEChERS method described above for the extraction of parent pesticides (see Section **[2.3.1](#page-6-0)**) was also tested for the extraction of pesticide metabolites.

Procedure B

157 A sample of homogenized vine leaves (2.5 g) or wine grapes/wine (10 g) was weighed into a 50-mL centrifugation tube, followed by the addition of 10 mL of a mixture of methanol:water (80:20, *v/v*) containing 1 % (*v/v*) of formic acid. The tubes were closed and shaken vigorously by a mechanical shaker for 20 min. The tubes were centrifuged for 5 min 161 at 11 200 rcf. An aliquot of the supernatant was filtered through a 0.22 μ m PTFE filter and transferred into a vial.

Procedure C

164 A sample of homogenized vine leaves (2.5 g) or wine grapes/wine (10 g) was weighed into a 50-mL centrifugation tube, followed by the addition of 10 mL of mixture of methanol:water (50:50, *v/v*) containing 1 % (*v/v*) of formic acid. The tubes were closed and 167 shaken vigorously by a mechanical shaker for 20 min. The tubes were centrifuged for 5 min at 11 200 rcf. An aliquot of the supernatant was filtered through a 0.22 µm PTFE filter and transferred into a vial.

Procedure D

171 10 g of wine grapes were weighed into a 50-mL centrifugation tube. Thereafter, the tubes were centrifuged for 5 min at 11 200 rcf. An aliquot of the filtered juice was transferred into a vial.

2.4. Identification and quantification of pesticide residues

 Identification of pesticide residues in the samples was based on a comparison of retention time, accurate mass (*m/z*) of the (de)protonated molecule, isotopic pattern matching and accurate mass of MS/MS fragments, to those obtained for pesticide reference standards. The acceptable mass error of potential elemental composition for (de)protonated molecule was ± 5 ppm. The identification criteria were in accordance with the requirements in the 180 European Commission's guideline SANTE/11813/2017.^{[9](#page-21-5)}

 Quantification was performed by using a calibration curve based on matrix-matching calibration standards. To obtain matrix-matched standards corresponding to concentration level 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 ng⋅mL⁻¹, 50 μL of a specific working standard mixture and 184 50 μL of internal standard (1 μg⋅mL⁻¹) were added to 900 μL of the blank extract (blank extract diluted with acetonitrile in ratios of 1:9 and 1:99)

2.5. LC-MS parameters

 The LC–HRMS(/MS) analyses of fungicide residues and their metabolites were performed using an Agilent Infinity 1290 LC system (Agilent Technologies, USA), equipped with an Acquity UPLC HSS T3 analytical column (100 mm × 2.1 mm, 1.8 μm particle size, Waters, USA). Mass spectrometry detection was performed using Quadrupole-Time of Flight spectrometry (Agilent Ion-Mobility Q-TOF 6560, USA) in positive and negative ESI modes.

 The column temperature was maintained at 40 °C. The injected sample volume was 4 μL. The mobile phases were different for analyses in electrospray positive (ESI+) and negative

 (ESI−) ionization modes. For compounds detected in the ESI+, mobile phases were (A) water with 5 mM ammonium formate and 0.1 % (*v/v*) formic acid and (B) methanol, respectively. For compounds detected in the ESI- , mobile phases were (A) water with 5 mM ammonium acetate and (B) pure methanol. The gradient was the same in both polarities: the starting 198 mobile phase composition was 5 % of the organic phase (B) with flow 0.2 mL⋅min⁻¹ and linearly changed to 99 % (B) with flow 0.3 mL∙min-1 in 10 min. This mobile phase composition was held for 2 min simultaneously with the flow rate being changed from 0.3 to 0.4 mL∙min[−]¹ . The column was reconditioned for 2 min in the starting composition of 5 % (B) 202 (flow rate 0.4 mL⋅min⁻¹). The autosampler temperature was maintained at 5 °C.

 The MS source conditions were as follows: capillary voltage (VCap) was 4 kV (-4kV in ESI-); 204 nozzle voltage was 1 kV; gas temperature and sheath gas temperature were 210 °C and 205 380 °C respectively; drying gas flow and sheath gas flow were 10 L⋅min⁻¹ and 12 L⋅min⁻¹ respectively, and nebulizer pressure was 342.6 kPa (35 psig) in both acquisition modes. 207 Collision induced dissociation was performed, using nitrogen and the collision energy was fixed (20 V). An Agilent MassHunter Workstation Software (version B.07.00; Agilent Technologies, USA) was used for data acquisition and data analysis.

2.6. Strategy for detection and identification of pesticide metabolites

 Detection and identification of pesticide metabolites in sample extracts (see Section **[2.3.1](#page-6-0)**) were based on calculated accurate mass (*m/z*), isotopic pattern matching and accurate mass of MS/MS fragments. The acceptable mass error of potential elemental composition for (de)protonated molecule was ± 5 ppm.

215 At first, HRMS mass spectra in a full-scan technique (without fragmentation – MS¹) were acquired across the entire chromatographic run, using a mass range of *m/z* 100-1100. The 217 obtained data were searched against the database of elemental composition of metabolites

 (*csv* format of file), created manually based on a survey in the available literature on pesticide metabolism in plants (see **[Table 2](#page-26-0)**), and consideration of common metabolic reactions (*e.g.* oxidation, dealkylation).

221 In the next step, the identity confirmation of metabolites detected in $MS¹$ was based on data acquired in the MS/MS run. 3 categories of fragments were searched:

223 (i) diagnostic ions, known for some groups of fungicides $\frac{10}{2}$ $\frac{10}{2}$ $\frac{10}{2}$;

- (ii) common fragments detected in the MS/MS spectrum of the parent pesticide as well as its metabolite;
- (iii) fragments characterizing a part of molecule with metabolic modification, not detected in the MS/MS spectrum of the parent pesticide.

 For identification of the conjugates of the parent pesticide and/or its metabolite, a search for neutral losses (*e.g*. hexoses) in fragmentation mass spectra was performed.

2.7. Method validation

 Performance characteristics (recovery, repeatability, within-laboratory reproducibility and limit of quantification) were determined for pesticide residues (parent compounds) in vine leaves, grapes and wine. Validation studies were performed on spiked blank samples. Two 234 spiking levels (0.002 mg⋅kg⁻¹ and 0.02 mg⋅kg⁻¹ in grapes and wine or 0.008 mg⋅kg⁻¹ and 235 0.08 mg⋅kg⁻¹ in vine leaves) were used and analyzed in 6 replicates. Within-laboratory 236 reproducibility (RSD_R) was determined from on-going QC-data in routine analyses. Samples were extracted by the extraction procedure described in Section **[2.3.1](#page-6-0)**.

 As standards of pesticide metabolites were not available, recovery experiments could not be performed. The precision (repeatability) of the method was determined by an analysis of samples containing incurred pesticide metabolites, extracted by *Procedure A* (see Section **[2.3.2](#page-7-0)**) in 6 replicates.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

 Like other crops, grapevine can also be invaded by pests. In specific cases, fungal infections are common. In conventional vineyards, synthetic fungicides are commonly applied for prevention and treatment throughout the growing season, as well as after the harvest. However, these compounds are not permitted in organic grape production. The only chemicals conceivable for this purpose are *e.g.* sulfur, lime sulfur or some copper 48 compounds.² The analysis of residues of synthetic pesticides might seem to be an efficient tool to control compliance with the restrictions in organic farming. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the Introduction, the absence of detectable pesticide residues, or the presence of their negligible traces, do not necessarily document that unauthorized use of banned plant protection products has occurred. To introduce some more reliable solution, we decided to investigate the possibility of screening the pesticide metabolites that are not involved in routine MRLs control (as they are not of toxicological concern), as treatment ´markers´. The implementation of the relevant screening method was the key task in the first phase of our research. In order to understand the dynamics of parent pesticides' dissipation and to have the relevant experimental matrices with incurred residues available, a number of fungicidal treatments were performed by our partners from the Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture in their experimental vineyards. The outcome of our pilot study is described in the paragraphs below.

3.1. Development of method for pesticide metabolites

262 With the exception of pesticide metabolites that are involved in residue definition $\frac{11}{2}$ $\frac{11}{2}$ $\frac{11}{2}$, in 263 scientific literature, information on the occurrence of these compounds originated through plant metabolism and a description of their analysis is very limited. Since nontoxic pesticide metabolites are practically unavailable as analytical standards, the only applicable screening

 method for them is high-resolution mass spectrometry, which allows for the detection of their (de)protonated molecules, supposing that the presumable elemental formula of the relevant compound is known. On this account, as described in the Section **[2.6](#page-9-0)** and summarized in **[Table 2](#page-26-0)**, based on the available documentation on existing pesticide metabolites, we established a database into which the exact masses of metabolites' molecular ions calculated were inserted (see **[Table 2](#page-26-0)**). To implement the method enabling 272 screening of these analytes, we had to perform simultaneous testing of an extraction procedure and their HRMS detection in the respective plant extracts prepared from treated grape wine samples.

3.1.1. Optimization of sample preparation procedure

276 As pesticide metabolites are generally more polar than parent compounds (the increase of polarity depends on the type of metabolic transformation), we were not sure whether a common QuEChERS extraction method would provide the highest (apparent) recovery.

 In total, four different procedures for the extraction of pesticide metabolites from pooled wine grapes with incurred residues were tested (the grapes used for this purpose were not treated by metrafenone). In addition to QuEChERS, also two methanol–water mixtures (80:20 and 50:50, *v*/*v*) were used as more polar extraction solvents. The last sample processing method, aimed at the illustration of metabolite transfer into juice, was realized by a simple separation of solids by centrifugation of the grapes' homogenate.

 With the exception of the QuEChERS extraction, in which phases partition results in discrimination of the most polar matrix components (they are not transferred into an acetonitrile layer), no clean-up step was employed in the above procedures, to prevent losses of potentially occurring metabolites assumed to be more polar than parent pesticides. **[Figure 1](#page-24-0)** shows the apparent extraction efficiencies, expressed as signal intensities as

 measured by the UHPLC-HRMS method. The ions of targeted metabolites were extracted using their calculated masses (**[Table 3](#page-26-1)**). Considering the QuEChERS extraction as a reference, we can see that this sample preparation procedure provided, on average, the highest analyte signals compared to the other procedures. It is worth noting that these results do not necessarily mean that the highest concentrations of target analytes were contained in QuEChERS extracts, since matrix effects (signal suppression) in samples prepared by other procedures might be more severe. This assumption supports observation of more intensive background signal in total ion chromatogram (TIC). It should be noted that, while the most polar components such as sugars or hydroxy-carboxylic acids, remain in the aqueous phase during the partition step in QuEChERS, these compounds elute in front part of the chromatogram, where the polar metabolites also mostly elute. Considering these facts, the QuEChERS method was employed in all follow-up experiments focused on pesticide metabolite screening.

3.1.2. Confirmation of metabolites' identity

 Altogether 18 metabolites originating from 7 pesticides were tentatively identified in the experimental samples, with their quantity depending on the sampling time and processing step. The list of parent compounds and detected metabolites, with exact mass of the (de)protonated molecule and their fragments, ion type and retention time is shown in **[Table](#page-26-1) [3](#page-26-1)**. The identity of pesticide metabolites tentatively identified by screening of their calculated 309 (de)protonated molecules (mass error tolerance \pm 5 ppm) in both ionization polarity modes and assessment of the isotopic pattern match were further confirmed by a critical analysis of their fragmentation spectra. To illustrate this generic approach, an example of the identification of three fenhexamid metabolites is given in the following paragraph.

3.1.3. Identification of metabolites of fenhexamid

314 Based on data from field trials^{[12](#page-22-2)}, residues of fenhexamid were not extensively metabolized in grapevine. Two metabolic pathways were described: (i) hydroxylation on the cyclohexyl group of parent molecule at 2- or 4-position, followed by formation of sugar conjugates, and (ii) glycosylation on the phenolic hydroxyl group of fenhexamid. The mass spectra acquired during analysis were investigated to confirm the presence of these metabolites in the tested samples.

320 A peak with a possible elemental composition $C_{14}H_{17}Cl_2NO_3$ (m/z 318.0658, [M+H]⁺) that might correspond to hydroxylated metabolite (Fen-OH) was detected in the chromatogram at 8.56 min. Its final tentative identification was based on the presence of fragment ions *m/z* 97.1006 and *m/z* 55.0527, which were the most abundant ions in the fragmentation mass spectrum and were also detected in the MS/MS spectrum of the parent fenhexamid. Fragment *m/z* 113.0960 in the spectrum of Fen-OH characterized the position of the hydroxyl group cyclohexyl ring in the metabolite molecule. Finally, the fragment *m/z* 300.0553 in the MS/MS spectrum corresponded to a loss of water molecule (∆*m/z* 18.0156 Da) from the metabolite Fen-OH (**[Figure](#page-24-1)** *2*).

 A similar approach was used for the identification of two sugar conjugates, glycoside of hydroxylated metabolite (Fen-OH-glycoside) and glycoside of fenhexamid (Fen-glycoside). 331 Peaks with possible elemental composition C₂₀H₂₇Cl₂NO₈ (m/z 480.1187, [M+H]⁺) and 332 C₂₀H₂₇Cl₂NO₇ (*m/z* 464.1237, [M+H]⁺) were detected in the chromatogram at 8.6 min and at 7.45 min, respectively. The identity of both conjugates was confirmed by matching of the fragment ions with fenhexamid or Fen-OH respectively, and by a neutral loss of hexose ([M- $C_6H_9O_5$ ⁺; $\Delta m/z$ 162.0535 Da) in the fragmentation mass spectra.

 As expected, in reversed phase chromatography all the tentatively identified metabolites of fenhexamid showed shorter retention times, compared to the parent pesticide, due to their more polar nature. (**[Figure 3](#page-24-2)**).

3.2. Validation

 Performance characteristics obtained within the validation method of parent pesticide compound in various matrices are summarized in **[Table 4](#page-29-0)**. Recoveries were in the range of 81-98 % and repeatabilities, expressed as relative standard deviation (RSD; %), were ≤16 % in all tested matrices. Within-laboratory reproducibilities were in the range of 5-18 %. Limits of 344 quantification (LOQ) were in the range of 0.001-0.1 mg kg^{-1} for grapes and wine, and in the 345 ange of 0.004-0.4 mg kg⁻¹ for vine leaves.^{[9](#page-21-5)}

 In the case of pesticide metabolites, the recovery values could not be determined, since, as mentioned earlier, pure standards are not commercially available. Therefore, only repeatabilities of measurements (repeatabilities of metabolites' signal intensities) were calculated as relative standard deviations of 6 replicate injections of QuEChERS extracts prepared from samples containing incurred metabolites. The obtained results of metabolites in vine leaves and grapes are summarized in **[Table 5](#page-29-1)**.

3.3. Changes in pesticide residues and levels of their metabolites

 The key objective of this study was to obtain further knowledge on the changes of pesticide residues and the origin of their metabolite levels in various parts of grapevine, including grapes, and during the wine-making process. With regard to the impossibility of quantifying metabolites' concentration, ´Response´, the ratio between the area of detected metabolite and area of internal standard (TPP in positive ionization mode and nicarbazin in negative ionization mode) was used for illustration of the concentration trends.

3.3.1. Vine leaves and wine grapes

 Following field treatment (a detailed description is in **[Table 1](#page-25-0)**), 9 out of 13 LC-MS amenable pesticide residues, together with their conceivable metabolites, were monitored in the collected samples. Degradation of particular pesticide residues in vine leaves was monitored during 8-18 weeks, based on their application in the vineyard. Sampling was performed always on the 1st to 4th day after each pesticide treatment. The last five weeks of a sampling period in the vineyard, and samples of wine grapes were collected, together with samples of vine leaves. The complete results of pesticide residue analysis in vine leaves and wine grapes are summarized in the **Supporting information – Figure S1**.

 Overall, concentrations of pesticide residues in vine leaves significantly dropped in the first week after specific treatment; the decrease of residues of dimethomorph, spiroxamin, tebuconazole and triadimenol was in the range of 27-40 %. In the case of fenhexamid, iprovalicarb, metrafenone, meptyldinocap, pyraclostrobin and quinoxyfen residues, it was even higher, 60-69 %. In subsequent weeks, the decline was somewhat slower. Nevertheless, with the exception of triadimenol, residues of applied fungicide were still detectable in the vine leaves.

 At the wine grape harvest, the last sampling was performed in the vineyard. In these samples of vine leaves and wine grapes, all residues were detected except for triadimenol. All residue levels decreased by 84-100 %.

 Pesticide metabolites were already detectable in vine leaves collected within the first sampling after the treatment. The spectrum of metabolites found in vine leaves and wine grapes was similar in the case of fenhexamid, iprovalicarb and spiroxamine. Metabolites of tebuconazole were detected in vine leaves only. In the case of dimethomorph, the pattern of its metabolites differed between grapes and vine leaves. However, dimethomorph-demethyl was found in both these matrices and, moreover, in vine leaves another Phase I metabolite,

 dimethomorph-hydroxy, was also present. Regarding wine grapes, in addition to dimethomorph-demethyl, a Phase II metabolite, dimethomorph-demethyl glycoside, was also detected.

 The obtained results for all tentatively identified metabolites are summarized in **Supporting information – Figures S3-S8**. To compare the changes in levels of metabolites and parent pesticides, the degradation dynamic of the parent pesticide is also displayed.

 As an example, the data for metabolites of fenhexamid in both types of samples are shown in **[Figure](#page-24-3)** *4*. Fen-OH was the metabolite of fenhexamid with the highest signal intensity. Nevertheless, the response of fenhexamid was higher than the response of its metabolites in all tested samples. For instance, in samples collected at harvest time, the response of fenhexamid was 5 times (in wine grapes) and 10 times (in vine leaves) higher than the response of Fen-OH. In samples collected 8 weeks after the treatment, the response of Fen- OH and Fen-OH glycoside in vine leaves slightly increased. On the other hand, the response of the third metabolite, Fen-glycoside, decreased (it is noteworthy that the background of co-eluting compounds did not change, thus the analyte decrease is not due to stronger matrix effects). As the biotransformation of pesticides in plants is a complex of enzymatic reactions, Fen-glycoside might be an intermediate product of a metabolic pathway, resulting in the formation of the Phase III metabolites.

3.3.2. Wine-making process

 We also attempted to find whether, and to what extent, pesticide residues and their metabolites are transferred from grapes into wine and could be used as markers of illegal practices in organic vineyards. For this purpose, samples were collected across the wine- making process. The obtained data are summarized in **Supporting information – Figure S2**. Residues of some pesticides, such as fenhexamid, iprovalicarb, pyraclostrobin in the juice

 obtained after the crushing and pressing of grapes, did not significantly decrease when 409 compared with their levels in processed grapes. On the other hand, a remarkable reduction of dimethomorph occurred. After clarification of must, concentrations of dimethomorph, fenhexamid and iprovalicarb decreased by 59-67 %. No detectable residues of metrafenone, pyraclostrobin, quinoxyfen, spiroxamine and tebuconazole were present in clarified must. The elimination of residues corresponds to the physicochemical properties of the respective pesticide. In general terms, less water soluble pesticides with a low octanol-water partition coefficient (*Kow)* are not significantly transferred into wine, as they are mainly absorbed in solid waste (seeds and skins).

 During fermentation of must, the concentrations of three pesticide residues (dimethomorph, fenhexamid and iprovalicarb) did not show any significant changes. In the final product – bottled white wine – pesticide residues were detected in the same quantities as in fermenting must. None of the processes following clarification resulted in considerable changes in the residues of parent pesticides.

 As described above, crushing, juicing of wine grapes and clarification of must led to reduced concentrations of parent residues. These processes had a significant influence on the metabolites of metrafenone, pyraclostrobin and spiroxamine; they were separated from must as well as the parent compounds.

 In samples collected during the wine-making process, metabolites of fenhexamid and iprovalicarb were detected. Changes in the levels of parent compounds and their metabolites are documented in **[Figure](#page-24-4)** *5*. In the case of fenhexamid, the response of Fen-OH 429 significantly increased and the response of glycosylated metabolites declined. These changes were probably caused by hydrolysis of glycosidic bonds in the molecules of Fen-glycoside and Fen-OH glycoside by yeast enzymes during the fermentation of must. Analysis of the

 metabolites of iprovalicarb showed different results. Levels of both tentatively identified metabolites showed no significant changes during the wine-making process. Based on the results shown in **[Figure](#page-24-4)** *5***,** clarification of must resulted in a decrease of levels of parent pesticides, but not their metabolites. All five metabolites were also detected in the final product – white wine.

 In conclusion, detection of pesticide metabolites in matrices with very low or non-detectable residues of parent pesticides may indicate illegal practices in organic farming. Nevertheless, for an unbiased conclusion whether contamination is not due to a drift of pesticides, quantification of the respective metabolites might be helpful, as it would enable an estimation of the earlier pesticide burden. However, for this purpose, the availability of pure analytical standards of pesticide metabolites would be needed.

 The strategy of pesticide metabolite screening could generically be employed for various other plant matrices and products thereof, including *e.g.* baby food where high standards regarding the quality of raw materials are required.

 Also worthy of note is the fact that the knowledge on the occurrence of pesticide metabolites in the human diet should be taken into consideration in biomonitoring studies, where such compounds occurring in biological fluids are considered as exposure markers to respective pesticides. The exposure to parent compounds might be overestimated, supposing that the product of biotransformation of the parent compound in the human body and that associated with (nontoxic) metabolites in the diet are identical.

Abbreviations used:

Fen-OH fenhexamid-hydroxy

PPP plant protection product

Associated contents

Supporting information

 Complete results of pesticide residue analysis in vine leaves, wine grapes and musts/wines (**Figure S1** – **S2**) and changes in levels of specific pesticide metabolites in vine leaves and wine grapes (**Figures S3** – **S8**).

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

- **Figure 1** Comparison of HRMS signal intensities (peak area, mass window +/- 5ppm) for the target pesticide metabolites in wine grape extracts prepared by various procedures (reference: QuEChERS value = 100 %), n = 3. "Y error bars" represent repeatability of the respective procedure in %.
- **Figure 2** MS/MS fragmentation mass spectra of fenhexamid and its metabolites (collision energy 20 V)
- **Figure 3** Overlaid extracted ion chromatograms of fenhexamid (*m*/*z* 302.0709) and metabolites Fen-OH (*m*/*z* 318.0658), Fen-glycoside (*m*/*z* 464.1237) and Fen-OH-glycoside (*m*/*z* 480.1187)
- **Figure 4** Changes in concentration of fenhexamid and levels of its metabolites in (A) vine leaves and (B) wine grapes
- **Figure 5** Changes in concentrations of fenhexamid, iprovalicarb and levels of their metabolites during the wine-making process

545 **TABLES**

546 **Table 1** Vineyard treatment by pesticide preparations and sampling of tested materials

547 * VL – vine leaves; WG – wine grapes; J – grape juice; M – must; YW – young wine; W – wine

548 ** C – contact; S – systemic; QS – quasi-systemic; X – not relevant

549 **Table 2** Library of screened pesticide residues and their metabolites

550 **Table 3** List of targeted pesticide residues and their tentatively identified metabolites in

551 tested samples (* WG – wine grapes; VL – vine leaves; M – must; W – wine)

553 **Table 4** Recoveries (REC), LOQs, RSD_R and repeatabilities (n=6) in grapes, wine and vine

554 leaves

555 **Table 5** Method repeatability (RSD, n=6) for analysis of metabolites in vine leaves and grapes

FIGURES & GRAPHICS

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