Pesticides found in more than 80% of tested European soils

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Credit: AI-generated image (disclaimer)

The industrialisation of agriculture has radically transformed the way most of our food is produced. By making large-scale production possible, it has led to more food being available at lower prices throughout the world. However, we are increasingly seeing the negative side of this chemically intensive system of food production. Today,

2,000 pesticides with 500 chemical substances are being used in Europe. However, data on how such substances affect soil quality is incomplete and fragmented, and fails to clearly reflect their overall impact on soil systems and human health.

First-time research conducted in the course of two EU-funded projects, iSQAPER and RECARE, is shedding light on the state of European soils. The results are far from reassuring. According to a paper published in the journal *Science of the Total Environment*, pesticide residues were found in the vast majority of agricultural soils tested in 11 European countries.

The researchers analysed 76 different pesticide residues from 317 topsoil samples. Alarmingly, 43 of the 76 pesticide residues tested were detected in the soils. "Considering that we tested