

Pesticide used on organic farms may cause breathing problems in farmworkers' children

Elemental sulfur, the most heavily-used pesticide in California, may harm the respiratory health of children living near farms that use the pesticide, according to new research led by UC Berkeley.

In a study of children in the agricultural community of Salinas Valley, California, researchers found significant associations between elemental sulfur use and poorer respiratory health. The study linked reduced lung function, more asthma-related symptoms and higher asthma medication use in children living about a half-mile or less from recent elemental sulfur applications compared to unexposed children.

The EPA generally considers elemental sulfur as safe for the environment and human health, but previous studies have shown that it is a respiratory irritant to exposed farmworkers. Elemental sulfur's effect on residential populations, especially children, living near treated fields has not previously been studied despite the chemical's widespread use and potential to drift from the fields where it is applied.

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Elemental sulfur is allowed for use on conventional and organic crops to control fungus and other pests and is very important to both systems. It is the most heavily used agricultural pesticide in California and Europe. In California alone, more than 21 million kilograms of elemental sulfur was applied in agriculture in 2013.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Heavily-Used Pesticide Linked To Breathing Problems In Farmworkers' Children](#)