

Pesticide exposure boosts cancer risk in farmers? Busting one of social media's favorite agriculture myths

Did you hear? Farmers have less cancer overall than the general population Nearly 10 years ago U.S. Agricultural Health Study investigators reported that farmers, pesticide applicators and their spouses had cancer deficits compared to the general population and this was an update from five years before that.

So is farming healthier than other jobs? As with most health questions, the answer is related to what farmers tend to do (keep physically active) and what they don't (smoke cigarettes). This is on average, of course. Yet this trend isn't limited to the United States. Studies in Australia, Canada and France also reported lower cancer rates among farmers

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I compare these stories and my personal knowledge with recent misinformation on social media and even in scientific literature about toxins, chemicals, farm waste and cancer among farmers. Really? Where? Who are these farmers? Does living near or on a farm increase cancer risk? According to several large population studies around the world, not at all.

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