

Avoid produce because of pesticides? No ‘sound science’ behind that recommendation, new report says

A [new report](#) from the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology aims to reduce consumers’ worries by describing how information from complex risk assessments can be misinterpreted in news stories and by consumer advocacy groups. The innately complex findings from these scientific publications can easily be shaped into unfavorable narratives that end up confusing grocery buyers more than aiding them.

“Consumers should feel confident, rather than uncomfortable, when purchasing fruits and vegetables,” says Dr. Carl K. Winter, Cooperative Extension Food Toxicology Specialist Emeritus at the University of California, Davis, and chair author of the CAST publication.

The new CAST paper provides an overview of how pesticides are used in crop production and their benefits in the food production system. The authors also offer accurate evaluations of scientific sources commonly used by media outlets and advocacy groups to shape consumer advice.

For example, results from U.S. federal regulatory monitoring programs are common sources used by advocacy groups to provide advice to consumers, such as what fruits and vegetables are most likely to contain pesticide residues. However, their guidance is in contrast to the actual findings from these federal programs, which often find most foods do not contain detectable amounts of pesticides. The foods that do have traceable amounts contain so little, they are considered harmless to human health.

“Recommendations made by advocacy groups that consumers avoid specific fruits and vegetables are not backed up with sound science,” Winter says. “The worst thing consumers can do is to reduce their consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables—organic or conventional—due to unwarranted concerns regarding pesticide residues.”

Original article: [Yes, You’re Exposed to Pesticides in Food; No, You Won’t be Harmed](#)