

Viewpoint: 'It undermines farmers and confidence in regulators' — Real impact of Environmental Working Group's organic-promoting 'Dirty Dozen' list

Nutrition experts agree that many Americans should eat more [fruits and vegetables], but that can be challenging for those with a busy lifestyle. But another reason that consumers hesitate to buy produce items is that they have been told that eating them can be risky because of pesticide residues. The main way they get that idea is through something called the "Dirty Dozen List" which is published each year by the Environmental Working Group.

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There are several reasons why this list has a negative effect on society. The first is that it represents an egregious misinterpretation of an extensive and transparent public data set called the USDA Pesticide Data Program.

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The second issue is that this messaging tends to discourage many people from consuming healthy amounts of fruits and vegetables. That is particularly true for those on limited incomes. We do not have a two-tiered food system that requires us to pay a price premium for safety, and the USDA makes it clear that its Organic certification is not about safety.

The third reason that the Dirty Dozen List is so corrosive is that it undermines public confidence in the EPA regulatory process for pesticides as if nothing has changed in the more than 50 years since that agency was established.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)