

Pesticides of Concern in our Food

According to a Consumer Reports Article, “The Six Most Concerning Pesticides On Produce,” (October 2020), the following pesticides used on produce/food are of greatest concern to human health:

Acephate

-*Found on*: non-organic green beans, summer squash, celery; imported mangoes, watermelon.
-*Why a concern*: it breaks down into methamidophos, a compound that has been banned in the US since 2009 because, as a neurotoxin, it damages the brain and nervous system. Methamidophos is still found on produce, likely because it is coming from acephate.

Chlorpropham

-*Found on*: nonorganic potatoes (and even to a minor extent on organic potatoes)
-*Why a concern*: it may interfere with human hormones, especially thyroid hormones; it is already banned in the European Union.

Chlorpyrifos

-*Found on*: nonorganic peaches (and even to a minor extent on organic broccoli and grapes)
-*Why a concern*: it is a neurotoxin that EPA nearly banned in 2016 before pesticide industry lobbying for additional research.

Cyhalothrin

-*Found on*: nonorganic cherries, kale, lettuce, nectarines, tomatoes, spinach, and imported lettuce, snap peas, tomatoes, and frozen green beans.
-*Why a concern*: it is thought to interfere with the body’s neuromuscular system.

Famoxadone

-*Found on*: nonorganic and organic spinach grown in the US
-*Why a concern*: some research suggests it is a hormone disruptor.

Fludioxonil

-*Found on*: nonorganic peaches and nectarines, apples, cherries, kiwi, pears, plums, potatoes
-*Why a concern*: thought to be a hormone disruptor.

Glyphosate

-*Found on*: grains and beans, including corn, soybeans, oats, chick peas
-*Why a concern*: the active ingredient in Roundup, it has been classified as a carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (World Health Organization).

Dicamba

-*Found on*: grains and beans
-*Why a concern*: known for its tendency to drift airborne, killing crops on neighboring farms, the US Court of Appeals ruled in 2020 that EPA should not have approved dicamba in the first place.

For more information, please see Consumer Reports, “The Six Most Concerning Pesticides on Produce,” and inset about other pesticides used on grains (October 2020).

This summary compiled by T.Newman, Pequannock Environmental Commission, September 9, 2021.