



May 19, 2010

Dear Health/Medical Reporter:

Whenever farmers and produce shippers hear of a report that indicates possible health concerns associated with fruits and vegetables, we take that report seriously. The safety of our products is of the utmost importance to us, particularly when it comes to children. So, when our organizations learned yesterday of an article published in *Pediatrics* that proposes a connection between Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and pesticides found on produce, we reached out to several nutrition and toxicological experts to gather more information.

What we learned was quite different from what is currently being reported. First and foremost, the health experts we talked to resoundingly agreed it is irresponsible to advise consumers to discontinue or reduce their consumption of any fresh fruit or vegetable based on findings from this one study. In fact, even the authors of the study itself do not claim a conclusive association between consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and ADHD.

We consulted with Dr. Robert Krieger, a pesticide scientist and head of the Personal Chemical Exposure Program at the University of California, Riverside. Here is a direct quote from him about the report:

It would be a mistake to conclude from this study that pesticides cause ADHD. In fact, the authors are careful to state that their results do not show a causal association.

As a toxicologist I first want consumers to know that the study did not include direct measurements of pesticide exposure, but instead measured breakdown products of pesticides (DAPs) in urine that are themselves not pesticides and not toxic and may be present in urine even in the absence of pesticide exposure. This represents a significant weakness in the study.

Measuring breakdown products in tiny amounts in urine is not a measurement of risk. Detectable levels are far below amounts that have any effect on well-designed toxicity studies.

Dr. Krieger also noted that human exposure to organophosphates has declined significantly over the past 20 years because farmers, industrial users and homeowners have all reduced or discontinued uses of these pesticides. Therefore, he said, it is highly unlikely that any reported increase in ADHD could be attributed to increased exposure to organophosphates.

Nutritional experts emphasize consistently that the most important thing consumers can do to improve health is to consume more fresh fruits and vegetables of all kinds. Any advice to the contrary will do more harm than good.

In the end, we agree with the report's authors who are calling for additional research. It is a respectable goal for researchers to want to learn more about the causes of ADHD. The farmers of fresh fruits and vegetables, who feed the produce they grow to their own children, would certainly like to know if there is something they should be doing differently. In the meantime, we urge you to continue to inform consumers that they should follow the recommendations of reputable health experts everywhere: People should continue to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables for good health.

Sincerely,



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Alliance for Food and Farming



Rich Matteis, Administrator
California Farm Bureau Federation



Bryan Silbermann, President and CEO
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