

County refrains from methyl iodide use, for now

Scientists insist that the toxicity of methyl iodide is so powerful it can change DNA structure. That wasn't enough to stop the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) from registering the controversial soil fumigant for use Dec. 20.

But Ventura County is being cautious.

Since the controversial decision by the DPR, a number of environmental groups have filed a suit in hopes of blocking the use of the pesticide on California farms. Until these suits are resolved, the county agricultural office will not be taking any chances.

"Methyl iodide is the most evaluated pesticide in the Department of Pesticide Regulation's history," explained Brooks. "DPR's evaluation determined methyl iodide can be used safely under its toughest-in-the-nation health-protective measures, including stricter buffer zones, more groundwater protections, reduced application rates and stronger protections for workers."

Not good enough, according to plaintiffs in the suit against the DPR, who are urging Gov. Jerry Brown to reverse DPR's decision. Kathryn Gilje, executive director of Pesticide Action Network North America, previously stated, "The chemical is just too dangerous to use in California."

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