

Methyl Iodide: The Cancer-Causing Chemical Behind Your Food

When researchers want to intentionally create cancerous cells in laboratories, they often use methyl iodide, a chemical that is also a neurotoxin and causes late-term miscarriages. And it kills soil-dwelling organisms -- which is why farmers (particularly strawberry and tomato growers) fumigate fields with it prior to planting.

Calling it one of the most toxic chemicals used in manufacturing, more than 50 scientists, including five Nobel laureates, wrote a letter (PDF) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) toward the end of the Bush II administration pleading that methyl iodide not be approved for agricultural use. To no avail. They failed in California, too, which sets its own environmental regulations, independent of the EPA. But the state followed the EPA's lead and approved it in 2010, just before Governor Schwarzenegger left office.

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