

Group tracks airborne fungicide

Don and Norma Smith couldn't understand why their sheep stopped producing lambs in the mid-1990s. When half the animals died mysteriously over one winter, they gave up on the profitable hobby that had won blue ribbons for their kids at the Minnesota State Fair.

It was only later that they figured the problem might be connected to chemicals used on the potato fields that had grown up around their small farm here on the sandy soil in west-central Minnesota.

"Many Minnesotans are regularly exposed to [it] in the air they breathe," said Emily Marquez, a scientist at PAN. "Even at low levels, airborne pesticides can raise serious health concerns."

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