

EPA pulls toxic apple pesticide. Finally!

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EPA made an important and long-awaited announcement Thursday when it [banned future sales](#) of the highly neurotoxic apple pesticide azinphos-methyl (AZM), also known as Guthion.

This is particularly good news for rural families, farmworkers and children headed back to school. Guthion residues are [found on](#) over 30% of U.S. apples.

The decision affirms earlier scientific findings that rural children face a triple-threat from [organophosphate](#) pesticides like Guthion as the pesticide drifts from fields into their homes or schools, appears as residue in the food they eat and is brought into their homes on the clothes of parents that work in agricultural fields.

Better late than never

After reviewing appeals from industry, EPA confirmed that the ban will go into effect on September 30th of this year as planned. The agency is, however, allowing use of existing stocks of the pesticide for one more year. This prolongs a phaseout that should have taken place back in 2004, when farmworker and environmental groups [sued EPA](#) demanding swift action.

Earthjustice Vice President Patti Goldman, who represented the farmworkers in court, [applauded the end of AZM](#):

It has taken us going to court to force the EPA to protect the American people from this deadly chemical. AZM will be off the market in a month and out of the air and our food in one year. It has taken too long but we will finally see the end of this nasty pesticide.

Guthion is most widely used on apples, followed by cherries, pears and blueberries. It is predominantly used in Washington, Oregon, California, Michigan and New York. According to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (the only state agency that clearly tracks pesticide use) over 1,000 pounds of the chemical were used on apples in the last year on record.

AZM is a neurotoxin, rated as highly hazardous by the World Health Organization and highly toxic by EPA. It has been [banned for use in Europe](#) since 2006.

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