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**DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT**



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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Public Advisory on Pesticide Residues on Vegetables**

As part of its regulatory activity in protecting the public from potentially unsafe foods, the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) has been testing fruits and vegetables for residual pesticide. The most recent batch tested by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, on behalf of the department, revealed the presence of pesticides that are not authorized for use on one vegetable that was tested. The remaining 12 vegetables either did not have any pesticide present or the levels of residual pesticide were within acceptable ranges.

Specifically, a sample of kang-kong, a leafy green vegetable also known as Chinese water spinach, was found to be contaminated with the pesticide, Carbaryl, which is not approved for use on kang kong.

Carbaryl is a pesticide used for the control of unwanted agricultural pests to increase crop yield. When used and applied appropriately, pesticides pose a minimal risk to the general public. Finding minute traces of pesticide or its components, called "residual pesticide," on fruits and vegetables are not uncommon. Locally, pesticides are regulated by the Guam Environmental Protection Agency (GEPA), but residual pesticide on agricultural food products is the responsibility of DPHSS. Under the law, any food with a pesticide level above the tolerance level established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or found to contain any level of unapproved pesticide, is deemed adulterated and cannot be sold in commerce.

As a result of the finding, this Department is working closely with GEPA and the Department of Agriculture in its investigation. Unfortunately, because six months have passed since the initial sampling of the kang kong and the receipt of the laboratory analysis, the contaminated kang kong is no longer present at retail facilities. There exists no U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved pesticides for use on kang kong pursuant to their federal regulations; therefore, any presence of residual pesticide will be considered a violation regardless of the levels detected.

This Department would like to remind the public to regularly wash hands after handling raw agricultural commodities that may be tainted with unnecessary levels of residual pesticide.

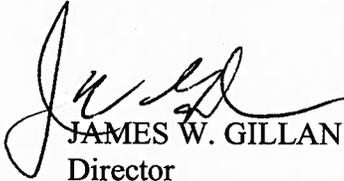
DPHSS further recommends the following to the public:

- Wash fruits and vegetables using large amounts of cold or warm tap water (with no soap or other detergents) before serving. Washing will help remove pesticide residues, dirt,

and microorganisms that may be on the surface of these foods. Scrub with a brush when appropriate for produce with firm skin or hard rind.

- Throw away outer leaves of leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and cabbage.
- Peeling and discarding outer skin or rinds of some produce is an option since some pesticides are absorbed into the plant.
- Always wash squash and melons since dirt or bacteria, and possibly residual pesticide, on the surface can be transferred to the inner flesh during cutting.
- If cooking fruits and vegetables; do so thoroughly. Cooking can break down some pesticide residues because they tend to be heat sensitive.
- Eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables can limit exposure to any one type of pesticide residue.

DPHSS wishes to emphasize that while ingestion of minute concentration of pesticide can occur during consumption of commercially and homegrown fruits and vegetables, the benefits of eating them outweigh the potential risks so the public is encouraged follow the recommendations provided. For further inquiry into this matter, the Division of Environmental Health of DPHSS may be contacted at 735-7221. *Dangkolo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase!*

  
JAMES W. GILLAN  
Director