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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 Division of Environmental Health of the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) has been testing fruits and vegetables for residual pesticide. Three batches of produce were tested by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on behalf of this Department. Laboratory results revealed that out of a total of 25 samples, four vegetables tested positive for residual pesticides that are not authorized for use. The remaining 21 samples of produce either did not have any residual pesticides present or the levels of residue were within acceptable ranges.

The four positive results are as follows:

1. **Long Beans (Locally grown)**

Green long beans (*Vigna unguiculata sesquipedalis*), commonly known as frioles (Chamorro) or sitaw (Filipino), were contaminated with the pesticide permethrin, which is not approved for use on this particular vegetable.

Permethrin is a restricted use pesticide for crop and wide area applications (i.e., nurseries, sod farms) due to its high toxicity to aquatic organisms, except for wide area mosquito adulticide use. It is a general use pesticide for residential and industrial applications. Permethrin is registered for use on/in numerous food/feed crops, livestock and livestock housing, modes of transportation, structures, buildings (including food handling establishments), Public Health mosquito abatement programs, and numerous residential use sites including use in outdoor and indoor spaces, pets, and clothing.

2. **Cucumbers (Locally grown)**

Cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*), commonly known as kiukamba (Chamorro) or pipino (Filipino), were contaminated with the pesticide dimethoate, which is not approved for use on this vegetable.

Dimethoate is a general use systemic organophosphate pesticide currently registered to control insect pests on fruit, vegetable, grain and field crops, ornamentals, and non-cropland adjacent to agricultural fields. It is available as an emulsifiable concentrate and wettable powder formulations.

**3. Korean Spinach (Imported from Korea)**

The Korean Spinach was contaminated with the pesticide fluquinconazole, which is not approved for use on this vegetable.

Fluquinconazole is not registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is an illegal pesticide and must not be applied on any produce sold in the United States, including Guam.

**4. Kang Kong (Locally grown)**

Kang kong (*Ipomoea aquatic*), a leafy green vegetable also known as Chinese water spinach or swamp cabbage, was found to be contaminated with the pesticide chlorothalonil, which is not approved for use on kang kong.

Chlorothalonil (2,4,5,6-tetrachloroisophthalonitrile) is a general use pesticide, particularly a fungicide, that is sold under commercial brand names such as Bravo Weather Stik, Daconil, and tetrachloroisophthalonitrile. Chlorothalonil has caused irritation of skin and mucous membranes of the eye and respiratory tract on contact. Cases of allergic contact dermatitis have been reported. Chlorothalonil is used as a broad spectrum, nonsystemic fungicide that can also be used as a wood protectant, pesticide, acaricide, and to control mold, mildew, bacteria, and algae.

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 (Guam EPA), 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.

As a result of these findings, this Department is working closely with GEPA and the Department of Agriculture in its investigation. Because a month has passed between the initial sampling of these produce and the receipt of the laboratory analysis, the contaminated vegetables are no longer present at retail facilities.

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.

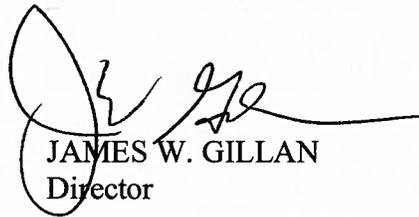
DPHSS further recommends the following to the public:

- 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 concentrations of pesticide can occur during consumption of commercially and homegrown fruits and vegetables, the benefits of eating these foods outweigh the potential risks, so the public is encouraged to follow the recommendations provided.

For further inquiry into this matter, the Division of Environmental Health of DPHSS may be contacted at 735-7221.



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