

California Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program: How We Do It. Thom M. Cate*, M. Pappathakis, A. Hawatky, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Enforcement Branch, Northern Regional Office. * Thomas.Cate@cdpr.ca.gov

California's Pesticide Residue Program provides a near real-time sample and response in the effort to detect illegal pesticide residues on fresh produce for human consumption in California. The program targets commodities preferentially consumed by children, various ethnic and cultural groups, and women aged 13-49, in an effort to prevent harmful pesticide residues reaching California consumers. Fourteen to eighteen different commodities are sampled up to six times per week throughout California, and submitted to analytic laboratories in Anaheim and Sacramento; results are typically available within 24-28 hours. This rapid turnaround allows the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) to quarantine and remove from streams of trade any commodity with illegal or possibly harmful pesticide residues before it reaches the consumer. Violative findings may either be an excess of a permitted residue, or any amount of a residue for which no Federal tolerance has been established.

The CDPR Residue program samples only fresh, unprocessed plant products destined for human consumption. Approximately 3.5 tons of produce was sampled in 2014, the most recent year for which data are available. These pesticide screens determined that of 2,255 domestic samples, only 57 (~2.5%) were carrying illegal levels of pesticide residue; for imported commodities, 171 of 1,155 samples (~15%) were similarly violative. Commodities with frequent rates of violation included spinach, kale, nectarines, limes, ginger, snow peas and cactus pads and fruit.