

accuracy.org

Toxic Oilfield Wastewater Used to Grow California Food, Including Organics - accuracy.org

3 minutes



Food and Water Watch recently released a [statement](#): “Are families around the country — and around the globe — eating California produce grown with toxic water from oil drilling? If they consume Halos Mandarins, POM Wonderful pomegranate juice, Wonderful pistachios, Sunview Raisins, Bee Sweet citrus or Sutter Home wine, they may well be. Those companies grow some of their products in four water districts in California’s Central Valley that buy wastewater from Chevron and other oil companies’ drill sites. Now, Food & Water Watch is announcing a campaign to ban the practice, which threatens our food, farm workers and the environment, with a new documentary by noted filmmaker Jon Bowermaster and a campaign videocapturing shocked reactions from people who previewed the video last week in front of Whole Foods’

headquarters in Austin, Texas.

“‘It’s time to shine a light on the risky yet under-the-radar use of toxic oil wastewater to grow our crops,’ said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. ‘People are shocked when they hear that the food — even organic food — that they give to their kids is grown in districts where this is happening.’ Nearly 40 percent of all organic produce grown in the U.S. comes from California.

“‘This practice is more deceptive than even pink slime,’ said Food & Water Watch California’s director, Adam Scow, referring to the controversial industry practice of mixing heavily processed, disinfected beef scraps into hamburger. ‘So-called healthy brands grown in these districts are using toxic waste to grow crops and then labeling them as pure goodness.’

“According to the state, four water districts in California (Cawelo Water District, North Kern Water District, Jasmin Mutual Water District, and Kern-Tulare Water District) receive up to 16 billion gallons of wastewater each year — enough to fill 25,000 Olympic-sized pools — from oil companies that can be used in the systems that provide water for irrigating crops. The oilfield wastewater is minimally processed and mixed with fresh water and sold to farmers for crop irrigation.

“The crops are not routinely tested for toxic chemicals. A recent study found that nearly 40 percent of the chemicals used by the companies providing oil wastewater to the districts are classified as ‘trade secrets’ or could not otherwise be identified, and known chemicals include several that cause cancer or reproductive harm, such as ethylbenzene and toluene.”

For interviews, contact:

JULIE LIGHT, [jligh at fwwatch.org](mailto:jligh@fwwatch.org), [@foodandwater](https://twitter.com/foodandwater)