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**Airborne Brain-Harming Pesticide Sickens Farmworkers**

Bakersfield, CA - A pesticide that was slated to be banned by US EPA earlier this year because of its links to neurological harms, appears to have sickened one-dozen workers earlier this morning and sent one to the hospital, according to early news reports.

Workers in a cabbage field south of Bakersfield were exposed to Vulcan (primary ingredient: chlorpyrifos) applied to a neighboring mandarin orchard that appears to have persisted in the air after its application and to have drifted onto the workers. Researchers, including those at UC Berkeley and UC Davis, have linked exposure to the chemical to developmental delays and diminished IQ in children. Chlorpyrifos is primarily manufactured by Dow Chemical Co.

California officials at the Department of Pesticide Regulation and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment are currently reviewing the risks of the pesticide and considering action on the pesticide by year's end.

"EPA failed to protect farmworkers and rural families when Secretary Pruitt ignored the science and scrapped the agency's proposed ban of chlorpyrifos earlier this year," said Valerie Gorospe, an organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment who visited the scene of the incident this morning. "Today's incident is further evidence that California officials should stand up to Dow Chemical, ban this brain-harming pesticide and invest in sustainable farming in California. While this incident may garner headlines, communities across California will continue to be exposed to a pesticide that contaminates their air, water and food on a daily basis."

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The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment is deeply rooted in California’s rural communities, where we have worked for decades to build trust and power that leads to lasting change. Through grassroots organizing, strategic partnerships, legal expertise, and policy advocacy, we build power that drives systemic change in communities, in our state, and throughout the country. The biggest environmental challenges of our day are felt most deeply in low-income communities and communities of color—like those in California's San Joaquin Valley where more than half of our nation's produce is grown in a region where residents lack access to clean air, water, and often basic infrastructure, such as sidewalks and public parks. Learn more at crpe-ej.org. Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CRPE.EJ/?fref=ts) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CRPE_EJ).