

Can't Stop Breathing

Californians for Pesticide Reform

Living Near an Orange Grove

Where did that yummy, perfect orange come from? Rub the skin and breathe in a citrus smell. What do you know about how that orange was grown and the people who fought to try to make sure it was grown safely?



Perhaps the orange came from Lindsay, California, a small town with hundreds of acres of orange groves. To make a "perfect" - looking orange, growers use chlorpyrifos (pronounced: clor-peer-i-fos) to keep

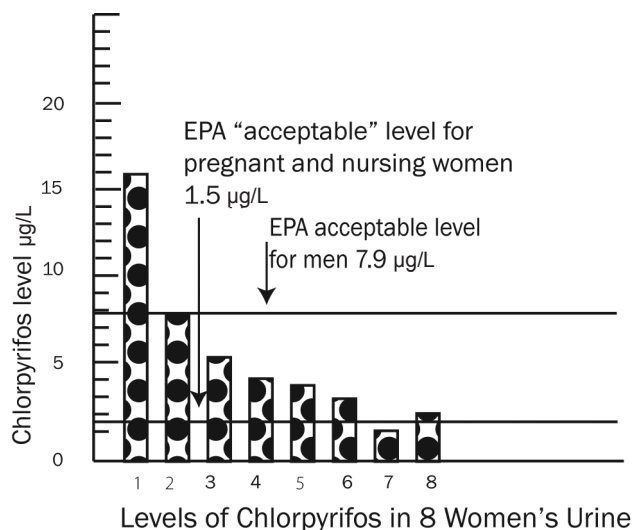
insects off the orange trees. Back in 2001, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned the use of chlorpyrifos in homes and apartments because it poses severe health risks to children. But California orange growers still use chlorpyrifos. In 2005, they used nearly two million pounds!

In Lindsay, CA, it is common for people to feel sick when the orange groves are sprayed. Peo-



Irma Arrollo, mother of four children and resident of Lindsay, California, calling for an end to pesticide air pollution.

ple report headaches, blurry vision, weakness, and vomiting after the spray is used. Some residents wanted to know if the insecticide was getting into their bodies and how much was present. They gave urine samples that were tested for chlorpyrifos. The graph below shows the results for eight of the women who had their urine tested.



Only one woman had a level considered acceptable for pregnant and nursing women. Amounts are in micrograms per liter (µg/L). See p. 5 for more on micrograms.

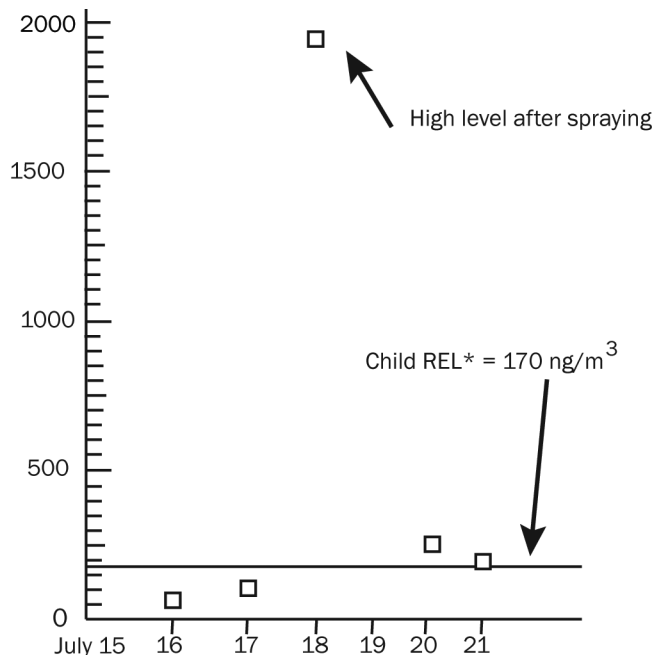
Move Away or Stay and Fight?

Ana Espinoza is one of the women who had her urine tested. The doctor told her that her chlorpyrifos level was two to three times higher than normal. She says, "I'm waiting before I have another baby." She knows that if pregnant women are exposed to pesticides, their babies might be born with health problems. Ana wants the best for her whole community. "Sometimes I think we should move to another place away from agriculture, but I know it does not solve the problem. We need to participate to make changes."



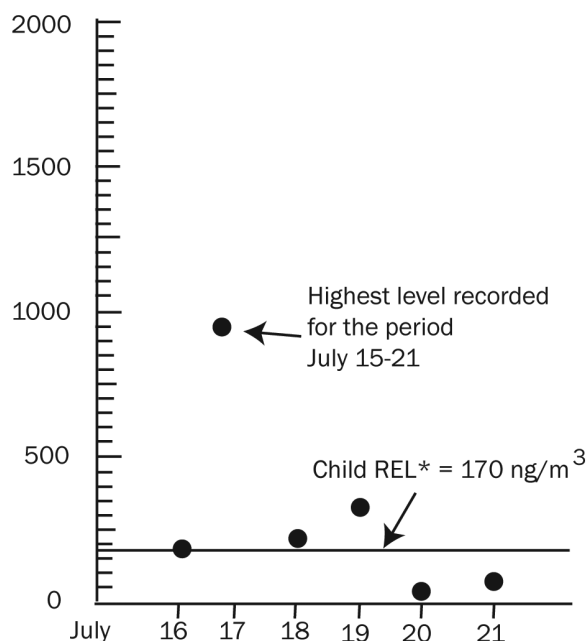
Ana Espinoza and her baby in Lindsay, CA

Chlorpyrifos in the Orange Groves



This graph shows levels of chlorpyrifos in the air measured in the groves on Lindmore Street during one week in July 2005. **NOTE:** REL stands for Reference Exposure Level. For children’s safety, the concentration of chlorpyrifos should not go above this level.

Chlorpyrifos Near a School



This graph shows levels of chlorpyrifos in the air measured near a school during the same week. **NOTE:** ng stands for nanogram, which is 0.000000001 grams. And m³ is cubic meters. To imagine a cubic meter, think of a box with a length, width, and height all one meter.

Getting Help and Winning

In Lindsay, The SAFE (Safe Air For Everyone) Campaign helped people set up drift catchers. Drift catchers suck in air that goes into a tube with sticky sides. The air passes through and any pesticides stick to it. A lab analyzes it and reports the pesticide levels.

Working with SAFE, community members organized to get a law passed that would protect their families. After two years of struggle, it is now illegal to spray pesticides within a quarter mile of schools, residences, and labor camps. Now, four more counties have used the drift catcher data to win protections for their communities.

This article was adapted from the SAFE website <www.pesticidereform.org/SAFE> with help from the Pesticide Watch Education Fund.

Tell the Media

Imagine you will speak to the press about the test results on pp. 32-33. Be ready to explain the trends. For example:

1. What are the high and low values?
2. What was the average over the time period?
3. How do the high results compare with levels set to protect children?
4. The levels are different in different parts of Lindsay. How so?