



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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DOH ORDERS A LEEWARD FARM TO CEASE SALE OF BASIL DUE TO PESTICIDE VIOLATION

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Food and Drug Branch today is placing an embargo on approximately 28 acres of fresh basil due to the presence of an unapproved pesticide found on the product during routine sampling. FAT Law's Farm, Inc., a farm with acreage in 'Ewa and Kunia, has been ordered to cease the sale, delivery, holding, or offering for sale of basil until further notice.

Basil samples were collected on FAT Law's 'Ewa farm on April 12, 2012 and analyzed for the presence of pesticide residues. The results received from the state laboratory on April 16 indicated a range of 0.045 to 3.49 parts per million (ppm) of methomyl, a pesticide that is not approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use on basil. Methomyl is approved by the EPA for use on a variety of vegetables and has an allowable range from 1 ppm for tomatoes up to 6 ppm for parsley leaves. There is a zero tolerance for methomyl on basil.

FAT Law's Farm, Inc. was notified on April 17 to cease the sale of all suspect basil. Today DOH inspectors will witness the destruction of basil at the 3-acre Ewa farm.

Additional samples from the Kunia farm were collected on April 17 and analyzed for the presence of methomyl. Results received on April 19 indicated a range from non-detectable to 0.507 ppm of methomyl on the basil. Today the farm was notified of the

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results and a Cease and Desist order was issued on an additional 25 acres of basil, prohibiting the farm from the sale, delivery, holding or offering for sale of basil until further notice. No basil will be allowed to be sold by the farm until subsequent samples indicate zero levels of methomyl.

The DOH believes that the basil crops tested on April 12 and 17 may have been distributed to consumers in Hawai'i. However, since the pesticide is allowed in greater amounts on other crops, the department does not consider the situation to be a significant threat to public health.

The DOH Food and Drug Branch routinely collects and tests a variety of produce samples each month for pesticide residues. Any sample found in violation is immediately followed with a cease and desist order, further sampling and education. The Food and Drug Branch safeguards public health by ensuring that food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices and related consumer products are safe and properly labeled. The program inspects establishments within the state where these products are manufactured, distributed, or sold. It also investigates complaints and collects samples to determine compliance with product standards.

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