



News Advisory

Food Safety Project White Paper: No elevated risk from food grown with oil field produced water

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Contact: Blair Robertson Blair.Robertson@Waterboards.ca.gov

SACRAMENTO – A five-year study of potential impacts to human health from consuming crops irrigated with produced water from oil fields in comparison to conventional irrigation sources has concluded that produced water creates no identifiable increased health risks.

Spearheaded by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board), the study was undertaken as part of the board's [Food Safety Project](#) and is now compiled in a 37-page [white paper](#) available to the public. The Board [announced the findings](#) in February of this year and solicited public comments for 30 days. The final version of the paper takes that public input into consideration.

A byproduct of oil production, produced water is the water portion of the fluid pumped from the ground with crude oil. The practice of reusing produced water for irrigation has occurred in California's Central Valley for decades. As drought conditions reduce other water sources, produced water can provide farmers with additional supplies for irrigation in certain limited areas of the Valley where produced water is naturally high quality.

During the study, Central Valley Water Board staff worked with an Expert Panel of volunteers to evaluate the practice of irrigating crops with produced water. The panel was comprised of experts in toxicology, agriculture, public health, and wildlife, as well as representatives from several state and federal agencies. The Expert Panel accepted input from parties interested in the Food Safety Project during 14 public meetings held from 2016 through 2020. Public meetings were in person and broadcast live with an option to submit questions/comments remotely. An email address was also established to receive public input.

To access the white paper and additional information related to the Food Safety Project, please visit the [Food Safety page](#).