



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ORDERS DESTRUCTION OF BASIL CROPS DUE TO PESTICIDE VIOLATIONS AT WONG HON HIN FARM IN WAIANAE

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health has ordered and witnessed the destruction of approximately 5,000 pounds of Thai basil grown at Wong Hon Hin Inc.'s Farm in Waianae. The ordered destruction came as a result of pesticide residue violations at the farm.

Health inspectors were notified on Sept. 23, that routine screening samples taken at a local produce distributor showed illegal levels of the organophosphate insecticide Malathion on Thai basil. Department of Health conducted a trace back investigation to identify the producer of the basil. Confirmatory samples taken at the farm revealed illegal pesticide levels on Thai basil growing at Wong Hon Hin Inc.

The produce distributor was notified on Sept. 23 to halt sales of Thai basil and Wong Hon Hin Inc. was ordered to halt any deliveries of the basil. The farm was notified about the violation and ordered to destroy the crops affected. Health inspectors witnessed the destruction of the affected basil at the farm on Sept. 30.

The farm will be subjected to three consecutive months of routine sampling of all crops grown to ensure that the produce grown does not exceed Maximum Contamination Levels* prescribed by law for pesticides. The farm may also be required to conduct third party pesticide residue sampling if any future violations occur.

In addition, produce distributors and all other markets may be required to obtain accompanying test results from Wong Hon Hin Inc. to certify the produce grown on their farm meets all health standards before it is sold to the public.

The Hawaii Department of Health conducts routine screening of raw agricultural commodities from major distributors, farmers markets, and large farms throughout the state to ensure locally grown fruits and vegetables meet state health standards for food safety. Crops found in violation are destroyed and information on the violation is posted at www.health.hawaii.gov/san/ for public review.

* Maximum Contamination Levels are designed to prevent chronic long-term exposure. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that Malathion has “suggestive evidence of carcinogenicity.” Many pesticides, including Malathion, are also toxic to beneficial insects (such as bees), birds, fish and other aquatic life.

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