Illegal Fungicide Found In Imported Orange Juice

By Britt E. Erickson

FDA is monitoring and sampling imports of orange juice and rejecting any shipments that contain residues of the fungicide carbendazim. The agency is taking the action after learning that Coca-Cola detected low levels of the chemical in orange juice imported from Brazil. Carbendazim is used legally in Brazil to kill a type of mold that grows on orange trees, but it is not approved for use on oranges in the U.S. EPA has conducted a preliminary risk assessment and concluded that the low levels of carbendazim that have been reported should not raise safety concerns. FDA does not intend to take action to recall imported orange juice that is already on the U.S. market, the agency stated in a Jan. 9 letter to the Juice Products Association, an industry group. FDA is, however, conducting its own testing of orange juice for carbendazim and will take action if it finds the pesticide at levels that pose a health risk.

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