

# Blended oilfield water shows no signs of tainting fruit

**Lois Henry, Bakersfield Californian, 10-12-16**

Fruit irrigated with recycled oilfield water has no different chemical makeup than fruit watered by other sources, according to a toxicology report released Wednesday by the Cawelo Water District.

The district and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board have been under fire for the longtime irrigation practice, which blends fresh water with recycled water from oilfield production, since news stories came out last summer calling the practice into question.

The Water Quality Control Board, which has always required this water be tested, increased the number of chemicals Cawelo must test for and assembled a food safety panel to look at the crops grown with this blended irrigation water.

Cawelo voluntarily hired toxicology firm Enviro-Tox to test produce harvested last fall, mostly nuts and grapes at that time of year.

Those findings, released last April, showed no difference between nuts and grapes irrigated with water that included the recycled oilfield water and nuts and grapes irrigated by other sources.

This new round of tests involved mandarins, oranges and lemons from 18 different locations, again some irrigated with the oilfield water, some from other sources.

Enviro-Tox looked for nine different chemicals that had been found in Cawelo's blended irrigation water — at levels lower than drinking water standards.

Those chemicals included: acetone and the petroleum-derived chemicals benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, acenaphthene, fluorene, naphthalene and phenanthrene.

Toxicologists again found no difference between the “test” fruit (irrigated with the blended oilfield water) and “control” fruit (irrigated using other sources.)

“These results indicate that organic chemical constituents in blended produced water are not being absorbed nor accumulate in edible fruit,” the report states.

Cawelo will continue testing produce grown with the blended oilfield water, including root crops, as they come into harvest.