

EPA proposal will allow antibiotic spraying of citrus crops

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposal to

allow use of the antibiotic streptomycin to treat citrus disease should be withdrawn because it poses a risk to human health and the environment, *Consumer Reports* says.

The move would lead to "a 26-fold increase in the use of streptomycin in plant agriculture and could trigger [antibiotic resistance](#) that would reduce the drug's effectiveness in treating diseases in people," the [consumer group](#) warned in a news release.

"This misguided proposal would allow a massive increase in the use of streptomycin—far greater than its use in human medicine," Michael Hansen, Ph.D., senior staff scientist at Consumer Reports, said in the news release. "The EPA has failed to adequately investigate the risks associated with this proposal, which would undermine current government efforts to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics. We urge the EPA to withdraw this proposal."

The EPA proposal would allow streptomycin to be sprayed on all citrus trees in the United States up to three times a year. Based on current commercial citrus acreage, the amount allowed to be sprayed would total more than 942,000 lb, according to *Consumer Reports*. The group noted that other federal agencies have taken steps to reduce overuse of antibiotics in agriculture and human medicine.

More information: [More Information](#)

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