

Calif. contemplates microbead ban

By Julia Lurie, Mother Jones

California is the latest state to consider banning products with microbeads, the tiny pieces of plastic, often less than a millimeter wide, that have become a popular addition to cosmetics and personal care products. Usually made of polyethylene, microbeads primarily serve as exfoliants in face washes and body scrubs, but also add color and texture to toothpastes, lip balms, moisturizing creams, and makeup.

A single tube of face wash can contain more than 300,000 of the plastic beads, which are cheaper than other common natural exfoliants like apricot seeds, coconut husks, or diatomaceous earth.

Microbeads are so small that they aren't caught by most water treatment plants, so they wind up in lakes, streams, and oceans. According to a report by New York's attorney general, as many as 19 tons of microbeads could be discharged into the state's waterways each year. Assuming all Americans are dumping microbeads at that rate, 300 tons per year end up in U.S. waterways.

Read the whole story

1 oz. cocaine, illegal ammo

seized in S. Tahoe

An armed ex-convict and two others were arrested early June 1 near the state line.

What started as a noise complaint at two rooms of the Big Pine Mountain House on Cedar Avenue ended with three arrests, about 1 ounce of cocaine being confiscated, along with scales and packaging material, and a .40-caliber handgun with an illegal high capacity magazine.

“Normally that’s an amount connected to distribution,” South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* of the coke.

Kevon Lomach, 26, of Sacramento was found sitting on the floorboard of a vehicle with the door open when officers arrived Monday about 2:30am. He was wanted on a misdemeanor arrest warrant. Officers also found the handgun on him, which is illegal for a felon to possess.

Two people in one of the rooms tried to flee out a back window but were detained by officers in the room.

Also arrested were Tiana Perez, 18, and Chris Jackson, 22, both of Sacramento and both on drug charges. Jackson was on criminal probation for attempted pimping.

A 19-year-old woman who is believed to be Lomach’s girlfriend was not arrested.

“It’s not uncommon for people to come from outside the area to think they are going to peddle their drugs. I don’t know if it is connected to prostitution, but certainly there was that element with that guy who had that history,” Uhler said.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Using rain barrels a violation of Nev. water rights

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

Can you use a rain barrel to collect water in Nevada?

Short answer:

No.

Full answer:

During spates of rain as we've had recently, the topic of rain barrels comes up.

These are what they sound like: a barrel that you collect rain or other precipitation so that you can use or redirect the water later.

How they work generally is that the downspout coming from the roof gutter is cut or has a diversion spout so rain empties into a barrel. Barrels then have a faucet inserted into the base. A hose can be attached to redirect the water when and where needed.

This is not legal in Nevada.

Read the whole story

Not all processed foods are unhealthy

By Erin Schumaker, Huffington Post

Pop quiz. Which of the following is considered a processed food: Kellogg's Corn Flakes, homemade greek yogurt, bagged baby spinach? (Answer: All of them.)

The point here, is that "processed foods" includes a much wider variety of products than most consumers typically associate with the term. Secondly, not all processed foods are evil. Processed foods can provide convenience, like in the case of bagged baby spinach, or safety, as in the case of pasteurized eggs, and can even – gasp – be healthy.

"The idea of saying just avoid processed foods is crazy," Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, CSSD, LDN, told The Huffington Post. "Yogurt is a processed food. It's actually been cultured and packaged. Canned beans, with no other ingredient besides beans, is processed because [the beans] have been cooked and they have been canned." Where Blatner draws the line with her endorsement is with extremely processed foods, which logically enough, is also where things start to get murky for consumers.

Read the whole story

Boat show adds Elvis-themed dinner

The South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic is having a dinner fit for the king.

The Fifties and Fins theme includes the Pink Hour and some of Elvis' favorite foods. The July 24 6pm event is at the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association Beach and Pool site.

Like the boat show, shuttles will be provided from the Keys parking locations. Dress as your favorite 50s icon.

Elvis turns 80, but that's not the only milestone birthday we will celebrate this evening. The Thunderbird, George Whittell Jr.'s magnificent Hacker Craft Commuter turns 75 years old.

The boat show is July 24-25 at the Tahoe Keys Marina. It is from noon-5pm on Saturday and 11am-5pm Sunday.

This year's theme, 50s & Fins, will honor those boats built between 1950 and 1959.

For more info and tickets, go online.

South Lake Tahoe pot shop raided

By Kathryn Reed

Various law enforcement agencies descended upon Tahoe Wellness Cooperative on Monday afternoon.

Search warrants were executed June 1 at the marijuana collective and at owner Cody Bass' home in South Lake Tahoe.

"A lot of evidence was taken that needs to be reviewed and audited before a decision is made (about any arrests)," Jim Clinchard, El Dorado County assistant district attorney, told

Lake Tahoe News. “The investigation relates to tax evasion and possession of marijuana for sale.”

What exactly was confiscated was not released.

No one was answering the phone at the collective so it is not known if the shop will stay open. Authorities did not shut it down.

TWC is the only remaining pot dispensary in South Lake Tahoe. There was a time when there were three. The city has created an ordinance where no new ones may open without City Council approval.

Collectives have long been in a tax void because of the federal government not recognizing medicinal marijuana as a legal substance. That is also why most collectives are not able to open a business bank account and do transactions via cash.

Assisting with what was described as a long and ongoing investigation were South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Task Force, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, state Board of Equalization and the Employment Development Department.

Food Bank farmers' market to return to SLT

The Food Bank's Mobile Pantry along with a free farmers' market will be in South Lake Tahoe June 24 from 10-11am.

The give-away will be at the American Legion Hall (2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd.)

On top of the mobile pantry and the produce distribution, this week a Food Bank truck stocked the shelves of the Family Resource Center, Bread & Broth, Senior Plaza, Kelly Ridge and a backpack program serving South Lake Tahoe schools.

For more information on how you to give or get help, call 530.621.9950 or email info@foodbankedc.org.

Pesticides used at levels that defy warnings

By Andrew Donohue and Bernice Yeung, Reveal

California continues to allow one of agriculture's most popular and potent chemicals to be used under rules its own toxicologists have said aren't scientifically sound.

As a result, residents in farming counties such as Kern, Fresno and San Joaquin are being put at a higher risk of cancer than state scientists believe to be acceptable, internal documents and interviews show.

A Reveal investigation last year showed how the state's Department of Pesticide Regulation gutted regulation of 1,3-Dichloropropene at the request of its manufacturer, Dow AgroSciences. In the past year, state officials have begun to rein in the use of the pesticide, a gas injected into the soil before planting crops such as strawberries and almonds.

This has limited the most excessive use in Ventura, Monterey and Merced counties, which went beyond what even Dow had envisioned. But the recent changes don't mean the department

closed the loophole that allowed the excess use.

It simply has gone back to enforcing the original outlines of the Dow loophole, meaning growers in communities across the state still legally can use the pesticide at levels that state scientists have said are unacceptable, newly released data for 2014 shows.

Last year, growers went past the original safety limits in 20 communities in Fresno County and in communities in Monterey, Santa Barbara and Kern counties, among others.

In total, growers in 54 townships went over the cap in 2014, according to department documents. That's an increase from 2013, when 47 did. In the areas that went over the cap, the most common crops were almonds, grapes and strawberries.

Joseph Frank, a retired state toxicologist who oversaw the department's review of 1,3-D, said top state officials chose Dow's analysis over their own scientists' analysis.

"It is playing games with numbers, and we've told management this," he said.



Pesticides are regularly being used despite health concerns. Photo/USFWS

The department said it's doing a new analysis of the health impacts of 1,3-D, an exercise known as a risk assessment.

Staff toxicologists are reviewing the science around 1,3-D and will issue safety guidelines to top managers. From there, managers will balance that science with a pesticide's benefits to design rules about how it can be used.

"The risk assessment will provide the scientific basis for a new plan to manage the use of this pesticide," said department spokeswoman Charlotte Fadipe.

Dow said the original state limits are based on conservative estimates and outdated science. Recent real-world air monitoring and studies on how long people live in one place show that the loophole doesn't cause public health concerns, the company said.

That 1,3-D is considered a cancer-causer in California doesn't on its face have to be alarming. We're constantly surrounded by things that could cause cancer, like the sun or arsenic in rice.

As the saying goes, the dose makes the poison.

The 1,3-D loophole highlights a core tension in how the government handles these doses.

While the pesticide regulation department's mission is to protect human health and the environment, its regulations often reflect a compromise between scientists' recommendations and the benefits a pesticide gives to the powerful agricultural industry.

This is generally how governments handle industrial chemicals. The name of the process manages to be at once bureaucratic and straightforward: risk management.

However, in the case of 1,3-D, there was little compromise. In the early 2000s, growers needed something to fill the gap left by an international ban on what was once their go-to pesticide, methyl bromide.

1,3-D fit the bill. It's a byproduct of plastic manufacturing that Dow has turned into an effective pesticide. But the state says it can cause cancer. Some 1,3-D eventually escapes into the air and can be breathed in by neighbors and workers.

Because of concerns over how much 1,3-D lingered in the air, the pesticide faced tight restrictions. The state had gone through a rigorous process to decide how much 1,3-D could be used. That limit already was stretching the boundaries of what state scientists thought was acceptable, Frank said.

But those limits didn't last long. Despite warnings from his own scientists, the department director at the time, Paul Helliher, signed off on Dow's request to loosen the rules. He and his successors then stopped enforcing the rules altogether, allowing excess 1,3-D use in agricultural communities across the state.

Because of all the different factors that can cause cancer, there's little way of knowing definitively whether anyone has gotten or will get cancer because of 1,3-D. But the excess use does increase the probability, the state scientists say.

The state already had a complicated history with 1,3-D.

In the early 1990s, it pulled 1,3-D from the market after learning how much lingered in the air after it had been applied. Air monitors at a Merced middle school picked up levels that were 800 times what the state said was acceptable on one day.

After five years of research, Dow persuaded state officials to put it back on the market. The state, though, needed a way to limit the amount of 1,3-D that could be used in each community. So regulators divided the state into small grids, 6-by-6-mile squares known as townships, and capped the amount of 1,3-D that could be used by growers in each township at

90,250 pounds a year.

At this level of use, scientists projected it could cause one extra cancer case per 100,000 people. The rules management put into place, Frank said, already were pushing the boundaries of what scientists thought was appropriate. State scientists previously had suggested that the department try to limit that risk to one cancer case per 1 million people. But state officials said Dow had argued that those restrictions would make it impossible to use 1,3-D.

A couple of years later, Dow and growers began pressuring the state to loosen those restrictions.

The proposed Dow plan worked like cellphone rollover minutes: If growers in a township didn't use all of their annual 1,3-D allotment in previous years, they could save it in a bank and use that much more in future years.

Each year, growers could use up to double the amount of 1,3-D that the original rules allowed – 180,500 pounds, so long as they had that amount saved up in the bank.

Dow and the department directors said that because cancer risk is averaged over 70 years, allowing a few years of increased use was fine as long as it all averaged out over time.

Scientists objected, saying anything over the annual limit violated the science underpinning the regulations. They said the concept of banking didn't hold water. Just one year of high exposure, Frank said, could provide the catalyst that may eventually give someone cancer.

Here's how one outside expert described it in our November story:

Chensheng Lu, an associate professor at Harvard University's School of Public Health, likened the averaging idea to drinking and driving. If you get pulled over once and you

are sober, but you are pulled over a second time and your blood alcohol level is twice as high as the legal limit, you can't average the two incidents and say everything is fine. "This is a very dangerous approach," Lu said.

In 2002, Helliher, the department director at the time, agreed with Dow, adopting the heart of its plan.

Once the Dow loophole was in place, top department officials essentially stopped regulating 1,3-D. In 2004, they began allowing growers to exceed the limits they had set – to the point that the exception became the rule. Agricultural businesses essentially had unfettered access to the chemical.

Over 12 years, growers in one Merced community used 1 million pounds more 1,3-D than they were supposed to even under the Dow plan.

Growers near Oxnard's Rio Mesa High School, which is surrounded on all four sides by strawberry fields, far surpassed the 180,500-pound limit under the Dow plan. In 2006, they used 267,000 pounds. Over 12 years, they used 317,000 more pounds 1,3-D than they had in the bank.

1,3-D use increased by more than 200 percent across the state. As it became a hit with strawberry growers, it increasingly was used near schools, homes and businesses in more populated areas like Ventura County.

Between 2002 and 2012, 1,3-D use in Ventura jumped 1,174 percent.

All told, people in more than 100 California communities have been at greater cancer risk, interviews with former state scientists and internal documents show.

Scientists with the Department of Pesticide Regulation have analyzed this system twice since Dow began floating the concept. Both times, state documents show, they objected to

the basic plan put forth by Dow and top officials.

"We are unaware of a defensible scientific rationale justifying such a practice," staff toxicologist Linda Hall concluded in a 2009 study.

Frank, who was Hall's boss at the time, said his team consulted experts at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "We could not find anyone in the field who disagreed with us," he said. "It wasn't even debatable."

Department leaders have been unable to provide a competing scientific analysis, outside of Dow's, that justifies the loophole.

Early last year, following inquiries from Reveal, Department of Pesticide Regulation Director Brian Leahy said the department would stop issuing 1,3-D exemptions.

The new state data reveals the limits of that decree.

Growers still may go above the 90,250-pound annual limit if they have 1,3-D in the bank. And the growers who accrued negative balances won't be monitored to ensure that they pay back their debt.

The department appears to be hoping that things eventually average out.

Fadipe, the department's spokeswoman, said simply holding the most prolific 1,3-D users to under 90,250 pounds "will not increase the average concentration." She continued: "You are either reducing the average air concentration (over 70 years) or not increasing it."

But that doesn't mean it will all add up.

Take the Merced community where growers used 1 million more pounds than they were supposed to under Dow's plan. In 2014, they used 80,377 pounds of 1,3-D.

If growers there used that amount each year for the next 50 years, the township's 70-year average since 1995 still would be more than the 90,250-pound cap – 97,841 pounds. But there's no fixed year that the 70-year average starts and stops, so choosing a timeframe for averaging becomes arbitrary.

Still, Leahy has trumpeted his decree as if it were a get-tough regulation, rather than a return to following the rules of the loophole.

In Leahy's response to pointed questions from school officials in charge of Rio Mesa, here's how a department fact sheet described the regulatory history of 1,3-D and other pesticides:

"Based on its scientific analysis of monitoring data and computer modeling, DPR (the Department of Pesticide Regulation) implemented a series of requirements beginning in the mid-1990s, including restrictions on application methods, buffer zones, limits on use, and other protection measures for metam (sodium), methyl bromide, and 1-3,D. In February 2014, DPR implemented additional restrictions to further reduce long-term exposure to 1-3,D. DPR will implement restrictions for chloropicrin in 2015. DPR is likely to further update its restrictions for 1-3,D in 2016."

The fact sheet skips straight from the 1990s to Leahy's February 2014 decree, leaving out the loosened regulations and broken rules in between.

Caesars studying restoration of lost retirement payments

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The general counsel for Caesars Entertainment Corp. told the Nevada Gaming Commission on Thursday the casino company was going through a “painstaking” process to determine how its bankrupt division can restore lost retirement and deferred compensation payments to current and former employees.

The issue came up during a routine suitability finding for one of Caesars’ executives.

Caesars halted some \$78.6 million in monthly payments in January when it filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy for its largest operating unit. This month, the company resumed payments to workers in two of five deferred compensation plans when it was determined the parent company was partially liable for those funds.

Caesars said in March the payments were halted because, under bankruptcy law, a company in a Chapter 11 reorganization, can’t separate supplemental retirement plans from other unsecured creditors.

Read the whole story

Lack of exercise can disrupt

body's rhythms

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Exercise may affect how and when we move, even when we aren't exercising, according to a fascinating new study in mice. The findings suggest that, by influencing our built-in body clocks, exercise may help our bodies to recognize the optimal times we should be moving, and when we should be still.

Most of us have heard of circadian rhythms. Our heartbeats, hormones, hunger, alertness, digestion, fatigue and other bodily functions move through regular cycles on a schedule that is both predictable and syncopated, changing as circumstances demand.

But probably few of us realize that physical activity, both in people and most animals, likewise tends to follow a broad, circadian pattern.

Most obviously, we tend to sleep at night, hardly moving, and be active during the day.



[Read the whole story](#)