

# Farm laborers, activist groups settle fungicide dispute with EPA

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*The pact ends four years of litigation over vinclozolin, which critics say can pose health risks*

By **ALEX PULASKI**  
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Farm worker and environmental groups have reached a settlement with

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ending four years of lawsuits over use of the fungicide vinclozolin.

Vinclozolin, marketed by the BASF Corp. under the trade name Ronilan, is widely used by Oregon snap bean farmers against white and gray mold. The state is second in snap bean production with 121,500 tons annually, behind only Wisconsin.

Lawyers for farm workers and environmentalists had sued to force the EPA to establish limits on how much chemical residue could remain on vegetables and plants and still be safe for laborers and consumers.

The lawsuits came as farmers and chemical manufacturers were asking for a 15th straight year of "emergency" exemptions allowing use of vinclozolin,

even though federal rules only allowed for a maximum of five years for such an exemption.

The legal fight was mounted by Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United, based in Woodburn, and the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, based in Eugene.

Among the health issues raised by the

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