CHAVEZ ASKS INQUIRY INTO LETTUCE TAINT

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (AP) — Cesar Chavez, the farm labor organizer, called today for a Congressional investigation into the contamination of lettuce by a new pesticide that he said resembled nerve gas. His request followed a disclosure by the Food and Drug Administration that contaminated lettuce shipments had been found in cities from Buffalo, N. Y., to Oxnard, Calif.

“What we’re saying is the consumer should be very concerned, that they should call their Congressmen and ask for an investigation,” Mr. Chavez said at a news conference.

The Federal Government has set a limit of one part per million as an acceptable residue of the pesticide, Monitor 4.

The Food and Drug Administration has found residue accumulations of up to 6.5 parts per million in lettuce in supermarkets. It said these amounts were not large enough to harm consumers.

In large doses, the chemical causes dizziness, coma and eventually death. In smaller doses, the chemical produces flu-like symptoms, according to the agency.

Lettuce with 6.5 parts per million residue was found in Rochester, N. Y., but was not seized because it had been sold by the time testing was completed.

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