

Did You Know?:

Fruit and vegetable crops have been dependent on pesticides for 100 years.

Widespread production of fruit and vegetables for transport to urban residents began in earnest about 100 years ago. Urban dwellers insisted that the produce be free of damage from insects and pathogens.

Beginning in the early 1900s, all of the apples grown in the U.S. were sprayed with arsenic to kill insects and lime sulfur to kill fungal pathogens. Most potatoes were sprayed with copper to kill the late blight fungus. By the 1940s, U.S. fruit and vegetable growers were spraying 300 million pounds of copper and sulfur to prevent disease infections. Synthetic chemical pesticides were introduced in the 1950s and replaced most of the older pesticides.

