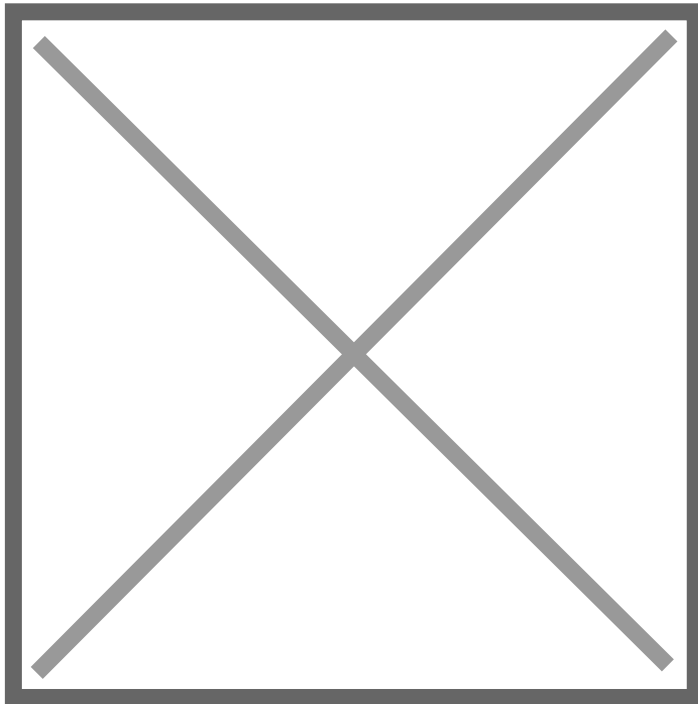




Wilbur-Ellis®, Talam Biotech to collaborate on US food crop solution for heavy metals

25 June 2025 | News

Companies enter market development agreement for novel approach to reducing toxic elements in food.



Companies enter market development agreement for novel approach to reducing toxic elements in food.

Wilbur-Ellis, a leading provider of innovative solutions for agriculture, announced that it has entered a US market development agreement with Talam Biotech, a biological technologies start-up, for Talam's natural microbial approach to reducing heavy metal uptake by crops.

"Reducing exposure to heavy metals in food demands a system-wide approach that starts at the farm," said John Chrosniak, Talam Biotech Chief Executive Officer. "Collaboration with agriculture innovation leaders like Wilbur-Ellis is key to unlocking the potential of our technology."

Talam researchers have developed a technology that uses naturally occurring soil microbes to reduce bioavailability of toxic heavy metals to crops. Reduced uptake by plants means less contaminants in grains, vegetables and fruits, with a direct positive impact on human health and crop yield in some cases.

"Talam's technology can make farmers significant players in addressing the challenge of heavy metals in food, with the potential to improve yields as well," said Chris Wooley, Wilbur-Ellis Portfolio Manager-Specialty Actives. "We've been impressed with Talam's early test results and are looking forward to helping bring this important innovation to US customers."

Heavy metals occur naturally in the environment and are also a result of human activity. They enter the food supply through the water and soil used to grow crops. Improving the understanding of the content and exposure of arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury in food and their impact on human health has increased consumer concerns and regulatory scrutiny around the world.

An International Food and Information Council survey of US consumers released last fall found that 64 percent of Americans are "very or extremely concerned" about heavy metals in food, with presence in baby food being the top-ranking concern. This report also shows that among this group of consumers, half say they have changed their eating habits as a result.

Early in 2025, the US Food and Drug Administration released action levels for lead in baby food. At the same time, California's Bill AB899 introducing requirements for testing and disclosure of heavy metals in baby foods went into effect. Maryland, Virginia, and Illinois have approved similar Bills to California's in the last few months.

Talam anticipates commercial launch of a wheat product in 2027. Additional products for vegetables, grains, and root crops will follow.