

# New York Regulators Recall Cannabis Over Pesticide Concerns

## New York State Issues Another Cannabis Recall Over Pesticide Contamination, Highlighting Ongoing Testing and Regulatory Challenges

### *Office of Cannabis Management Flags Unreliable Testing and Recalls Products Sold Under ‘Harvest’ Brand*

New York’s cannabis oversight agency has issued a new product recall following the discovery of potentially harmful pesticide residues in cannabis flower that had previously been approved for legal sale. This marks the second major recall in less than a month and underscores persistent concerns about testing lab reliability and regulatory oversight in the state’s nascent legal marijuana market.

On July 14, the New York Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) announced that it is recalling three specific cannabis flower lots distributed by East End Flower Farm and sold under the brand name “Harvest.” The precautionary recall stems from the involvement of Lexachrom Analytical Laboratory, a testing facility that the OCM has since barred from performing any further cannabis product testing.

While the OCM has not received reports of adverse health effects or consumer illnesses linked to the recalled products, it is acting out of an abundance of caution, citing inconsistent or unreliable test results provided by Lexachrom prior to the ban. The agency’s statement emphasized its commitment to product safety, consumer protection, and upholding confidence in the regulated cannabis supply chain.

### **Details of the Recalled Cannabis Products and Contaminated Flower Batches**

The specific cannabis flower strains affected by the recall include three varieties sold in 3.5-gram packages under the Harvest brand. Each of the following product lots is subject to recall, regardless of whether the packages have been opened or consumed:

- **Harvest – Secret #9, Flower, 3.5 grams** (Lot No. EE-89-9-001)
- **Harvest – Lemon Haze, Flower, 3.5 grams** (Lot No. EE-LH-8-001)
- **Harvest – Pure Michigan, Flower, 3.5 grams** (Lot No. EE-PM-8-001)

East End Flower Farm voluntarily submitted a retest of the “Secret #9” lot after questions were raised about Lexachrom’s pesticide screening procedures. The retest revealed pesticide levels above the allowable thresholds set by the OCM. Although the other two lots—Lemon Haze and Pure Michigan—were not retested, OCM decided to include them in the recall to ensure comprehensive consumer safety.

Consumers who have purchased any of the above lots are advised to return the products to the licensed dispensary where they were purchased. Returns will be accepted even if the product has been opened or partially used.

## **Pesticide Testing Failures Prompt Increased Scrutiny of Cannabis Labs in New York**

This latest incident has reignited scrutiny of cannabis testing laboratories operating in New York, particularly in relation to their methods, transparency, and potential fraud. Lexachrom Analytical Laboratory has been delisted from the OCM's approved facilities list, and the agency has begun investigating other labs for possible violations or inconsistencies in their testing protocols.

Reliable testing is a cornerstone of consumer safety in legal cannabis markets. Labs are tasked with screening for pesticides, heavy metals, residual solvents, mold, and microbial contamination—none of which are visible to the naked eye. When labs fail to detect harmful substances or falsify results, consumers are at risk, and the credibility of the regulated system is jeopardized.

The issue is compounded by the fact that the New York market is still in its early stages, with a limited number of licensed growers, processors, and retailers. Any regulatory misstep can have outsized consequences, both for public health and for the perception of the cannabis industry in the state.

## **Concerns Grow Over Product 'Inversion' and the Insertion of Illicit Cannabis into Legal Channels**

Another ongoing concern for New York regulators and legal cannabis operators is the practice known as “**inversion**”—the illicit funneling of cannabis products from unregulated sources into the legal market. Some past product recalls in New York have been linked to this issue, where flower or concentrates produced outside the legal framework are repackaged and sold as compliant products.

Inversion presents a significant threat to market integrity, as unlicensed cannabis may contain higher levels of contaminants or may not meet the state's stringent quality standards. For legal operators following regulations, this creates an uneven playing field and undermines their efforts to compete fairly.

While the OCM has increased its enforcement actions and begun issuing fines and suspensions to non-compliant operators, the agency faces an uphill battle in ensuring total compliance across a growing number of businesses.

## **Industry Leaders and Consumer Advocates Call for More Robust Oversight and Transparency**

In the wake of these recalls, industry stakeholders have called on the OCM to improve oversight of testing labs and enhance the transparency of recall procedures. Advocates say a centralized, publicly accessible database of recalls, testing results, and enforcement actions would go a long way toward rebuilding public trust.

Licensed operators are also urging the OCM to ensure testing labs are subject to third-party audits and more rigorous certification standards. “Trust in the legal system depends on trust in the safety of products,” said one licensed grower. “Without consistent testing and clear accountability, that trust erodes.”

Consumer groups, meanwhile, are emphasizing the importance of education. Many first-time cannabis consumers in New York may be unaware of how product recalls work, or what signs to look for in potentially tainted goods. Dispensaries are being asked to clearly post recall information and proactively reach out to

affected customers.

## **New York's Growing Cannabis Market Faces Regulatory Hurdles, but Officials Remain Committed to Consumer Protection**

New York's adult-use cannabis market is expanding, but growing pains have emerged alongside opportunity. The state's goals include creating a socially equitable market, prioritizing minority-owned businesses, and reinvesting cannabis revenue into communities harmed by past prohibition.

However, ensuring that these goals are met while simultaneously building a transparent and secure supply chain has proven to be a challenge. Product recalls such as this latest one involving East End Flower Farm remind both regulators and consumers that vigilance and continuous improvement are essential components of a safe legal cannabis ecosystem.

To its credit, the Office of Cannabis Management appears committed to learning from these incidents. By removing non-compliant labs and proactively recalling questionable products, the agency is signaling that product safety is non-negotiable.

As more operators enter the market and as consumers become more discerning, the standards for transparency, reliability, and safety will only rise. New York's ability to enforce those standards will ultimately determine the long-term health of its cannabis economy.

For now, cannabis consumers are urged to check with dispensaries for product recalls and remain informed about the brands and batches they purchase. In a developing market, an informed consumer is not only empowered, they're protected.

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