School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives

Vol. 5 No. 6 Nov/Dec 2005

Beyond Pesticides / National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
701 E Street, SE, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20003 • 202-543-5450
info@beyondpesticides.org • www.beyondpesticides.org

School Updates from Around the Country Show Progress

This school year began with exciting news for parents around the country. In New York, a bill requiring the use of green cleaning products was passed. In California, the Goleta school board became the first school district in the county to ban pesticides in schools, and a bill protecting the state's school children from experimental pesticides was signed into law. The Seattle School Board adopted a district-wide policy to eliminate the use of the most toxic pesticides in schools, and, in North Carolina, twenty-one school districts were recognized for their work to safeguard children's health.

New York:
A bill passed by the New York Legislature now requires schools to use green cleaning products. Senate Bill 5435 was signed into law on August 23, 2005, by New York Governor George Pataki, requiring the procurement and use of environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products in schools.

California:
California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Assembly Bill AB 405, a bill banning the use of experimental pesticides in California Schools. According to California Safe Schools, AB 405 will prohibit the use of experimental or new pesticides without full registration on school sites. Essentially, this bill will prevent school children and teachers from being exposed to experimental and/or insufficiently tested pesticide products. Additionally, AB 405 prohibits the use of pesticide products on school sites for which registration has been canceled, suspended, or marked for phase out of use.

Also in California, the Goleta school board voted to become the first school district in Santa Barbara County to rid its campuses of pesticides based on a proposal suggested by the district's maintenance and operation's director. Effective immediately, the district will stop using the last two pesticides in its arsenal: fumitoxins for gophers, and Roundup Pro for weeds.

Washington:
In mid-September, the Seattle School Board unanimously adopted a strong pesticide reduction policy. Seattle School Board's H-12.00 Integrated Pest Management Policy is a district-wide policy intended to eliminate the use of the most toxic pesticides in schools. The new policy prohibits the use of pesticides linked to cancer, nervous system damage, and other health risks.

North Carolina:
Lastly, in an effort to acknowledge the achievements of school districts commitment to childrens' health through integrated pest management(IPM) programs, Dr. Jon Ort, Director of the Cooperative Extension and North Carolina State University presented twenty-one school districts with awards in a ceremony held in Raleigh, North Carolina. The schools received awards in the following categories: IPM Initiative Award, IPM Program Award and IPM Leadership Award.

Congratulations to all on an outstanding job.

TAKE ACTION: Although significant progress has been made in some states, federal legislation is still lacking to protect the nation's school children from toxic pesticide use. You can help by contacting your representatives and urging them to support the School Environmental Protection Act (SEPA), introduced this year by Congressman Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). Contact Beyond Pesticides for more information.

Antibacterial Follow-up: Groups Ask FDA to Ban Antibacterial Products Containing Triclosan

Citing health concerns, a coalition of 15 public health and environmental groups led by Beyond Pesticides petitioned the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on October 25, 2005 to pull from the market widely used household products that contain the germ fighting chemical triclosan. Scientific studies dispute the need for the chemical and link its widespread use to health and environmental effects and the development of stronger bacteria that are increasingly difficult to control.

The groups are asking FDA to recognize the urgency of the problem and expedite action to ban household use of triclosan after an FDA advisory panel that met in October 2005 voted 11-1 that antibacterial soaps and washes are no more effective than regular soap and water in fighting infections. The committee also expressed concerns about antibiotic resistance and environmental risks.

continued on page 2

School Pesticide Monitor is published by Beyond Pesticides and is a free service to those interested in school pesticide issues. Editors: Michele Roberts and Aviva Glaser
If you are interested in receiving the *School Pesticide Monitor* via email, contact us at aglaser@beyondpesticides.org.

School Pesticide Monitor
Beyond Pesticides/
National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
701 E Street, SE, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 543-5450

Antibacterial Follow-Up:

Groups Ask FDA to Ban Antibacterial Products *(continued from page 1)*

Retired National Institutes for Health senior scientist Cecil Fox, Ph.D., said, "FDA's failure is a national scandal."

Triclosan is found in hundreds of common everyday products, including deodorants, toothpastes, cosmetics, fabrics, plastics and nearly half of all commercial soaps. Triclosan is used so commonly that it has made its way into the human body, with studies showing residues in the umbilical cord blood of infants and in breast milk of mothers. A growing body of research finds that triclosan promotes the emergence of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and antibacterial cleaners. Triclosan has also been linked to the formation of dioxin and chloroform, two chemicals. Additionally, triclosan is among the most prevalent contaminants not removed by typical wastewater treatment plants, and is commonly detected in streams and other waterways.

"With enormous medical concern about antibiotic resistant disease, doctors will tell you that nothing beats good old soap and water," said Michael Green, Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Health.

For more information, contact Beyond Pesticides and see May/June 2005 issue of the *School Pesticide Monitor*. The full petition and press release, as well as factsheet on triclosan, is available at **www.beyondpesticides.org**.

Common Pesticides Poison Homes

A new study published in the *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health* finds that synthetic pyrethroids persist in house dust and air in significant concentrations for months after they are applied, disproving the popular myth that they are not long lasting. This class of chemicals is found in common insecticides like Raid®, Demon®, Ambush®, and others frequently found in garden and hardware stores. Synthetic pyrethroids are also commonly applied in homes, schools, and other buildings by pest control companies.

Synthetic pyrethroids are chemically formulated versions of the natural-based pesticide pyrethrum, made from plant extracts . A widely used class of insecticides, synthetic pyrethroids are designed to be more toxic and longer lasting than pyrethrum, and therefore are more potent to insects and pose more risks to humans.

The study specifically looks at the pyrethroids cyfluthrin, cypermethrin, deltamethrin, and permethrin. The researchers collected dust and airborne particles in 19 houses and buildings one day before treatments by pest control operators and at intervals after the treatment. They found that even after 4-6 months, all four chemicals could still be detected. Shockingly, as long as one year after treatment, both permethrin and cyfluthrin levels remained elevated in house dust, indicating that these two pyrethroids in particular have very slow degradation times.

Earlier this summer, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released its *Third National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals*. The report found that exposure to synthetic pyrethroids is widespread; specifically, permethrin, cypermethrin, deltamethrin, and/or their metabolites were all found in greater than 50% of the subjects tested.

These two new studies are particularly worrisome in light of the many health problems associated with synthetic pyrethroids. Exposure to synthetic pyrethroids has been reported to lead to headaches, dizziness, nausea, irritation, and skin sensations. EPA classifies both permethrin and cypermethrin as possible human carcinogens and as suspected endocrine disruptors. Synthetic pyrethroids have also been linked to respiratory problems, and may be triggers for asthma attacks. In view of the fact that asthma is the most common long-term childhood illness today, persistent residues of pyrethroids in house dust and air need to be taken very seriously.