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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Now that the HST has been rejected in a referendum, how do you think you will be affected?

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Home » Opinion » **Letters**

Tarring all pesticides with same brush

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AUGUST 31, 2011

Re: "Source of statements on pesticides says it all," by Warren Bell, Aug. 25.

Dr. Bell's letter exemplifies a typical strategy of activists who are campaigning to ban pesticides: attack the person, not the science. He lists me as an industry supporter, but says nothing about the limitations of epidemiology, which I mentioned in my letter ("Pesticide evaluations need to be based on facts," Aug. 19).

Obviously, in Bell's opinion, anyone ever connected with industry cannot be trusted and must not care for either his/her own health or that of any Canadian. I believe Bell has the utmost temerity to suggest that I care more about preventing the banning of pesticides than protecting the health of the public.

I have been retired for seven years and receive no remuneration from lobbyists, pesticide companies, manufacturers, or distributors.

Bell mentions atrazine ? an agricultural pesticide not used for landscape and garden purposes ? and how it "deforms frogs." This claim originates from studies performed by Dr. Tyrone Hayes of the University of California, Berkeley, and incorrectly named "Lionel Hays" by Bell.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), because of what it perceives as deficiencies in Hayes' scientific procedures, has not accepted his work on atrazine. Furthermore, the male laboratory-produced frogs used by Hayes, as I understand it, have male cytoplasm and are therefore not like those found in nature.

Since all cytoplasm originates from the female, males should not have a male version. This leads one to question what, if any, relationship Hayes' studies have to do with the frogs found in a natural habitat. It is more important to note that the results of Hayes' studies have not been replicated elsewhere and, as mentioned, are not even accepted by the EPA.

Bell also mentions that Roundup kills frogs. First, there must (under B.C. government legislation) be a buffer zone between the area being treated and any body of water to help prevent run-off into the water. Secondly, there is evidence that it is the Roundup that is formulated with fatty acids that may be toxic to frogs, while the formulations without them are not. It should be noted that herbicidal (organic) soaps, for example, are fatty acids.

As do so many anti-pesticide activists, Bell associates any problem with any pesticide (even if only perceived and not proven) with all pesticides. Extrapolating from this logic, one must suppose that if Bell, as a physician, discovered a problem with any one of the pharmaceuticals which he prescribes, he would be compelled to recommend banning all medicines.

JOHN J. HOLLAND

Kelowna

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Richard Clarkson 22 minutes ago

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Why should people connected with the pesticide industry have a monopoly on science and be always right? After all they have a built-in bias. Mr. Holland may be retired but is still very much influenced by this pro-pesticide mentality and conditioning. I repeat, why should people with current or former connections to the pesticide industry have a monopoly on science? This defies common sense. The case of atrazine and Roundup is predictable. Industry spokesmen and academics funded by the industry claim that they are harmless, independent professionals say otherwise. Who is more credible? Indeed, source of statements on pesticides says it all.

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Apple Juice 3 hours ago

Here's my opinion on the subject matter:

One can talk about frogs -- or, better yet, let's talk about rats. The PMRA's risk management process on pesticide 'safety' is largely based on tests using lab rats. The problem is, these rats have detoxification genes that are missing in humans. In other words, rats may be able to efficiently detox a poison that humans simply can't. Since it's not ethical to test on humans, we'll never really have "proof" that pesticides are safe for humans. In my opinion, the whole premise that pesticide industry activists use to state that pesticides are "safe" is fundamentally flawed and driven by profit.

Health Canada's PMRA does not have a enviable track record. I can name pesticides that they once claimed were safe (when used according to directions) that later were yanked off the shelves due to adverse health and environmental effects i.e. Dursban (for indoor use) and Diazinon (used on lawns etc) ... If the PMRA (or Agriculture Canada, in the day) had done their job properly, these products would never have been allowed for sale in the first place! And don't get me started on the pharmaceuticals that Health Canada said were safe only to have to recall them (Vioxx etc). When asked, most Canadians say they don't trust our government. Is it any wonder?

Perhaps if the PMRA didn't receive so much of their funding (in the millions of \$) from the pesticide industry, and instead relied upon independent peer-reviewed science, and not industry's bought science, then the science used would be more fair and balanced! Until then, I prefer to trust the independent science from our medical doctors and scientists who are not on the payroll of the pesticide industry!

6 people liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)



552312 4 hours ago

Glad to read something that is based on science and not fear mongering by anti pesticide activists. Thanks to people like Holland there is some truth injected into this dialogue. Hopefully Terry Lake starts to see the activists for what they truly are, PAID LOBBYISTS.

6 people liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)



EnviroEd 13 hours ago

While activist like Warren Bell will continue to make false claims and use scare tactics to advance their agenda, it is encouraging to read factual information on the subject. Thank you once again Mr. Holland for bringing clarity to this complex issue.

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