
**Toxic Fairways:
Risking Groundwater Contamination From
Pesticides on Long Island Golf Courses**

**Attorney General of New York
New York State
Office of the Attorney General
Environmental Protection Bureau
Original Printing: July 1991
Revised: Feb. 1994, Dec. 1995**

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Survey Methods](#)
- [Summary of Survey Results](#)
- [Other Potential Dangers of Golf Course Pesticides](#)
- [Recommendations](#)
- [Appendix](#)

Tables

- [Table 1: 52 Golf Course Responses](#)
 - [Table 2: Pesticides Used by 52 LI Golf Courses](#)
 - [Table 3: Selected Health Effects of Active Ingredients of Pesticides](#)
 - [Table 4: Pesticide Leaching Potential](#)
-

Toxic Fairways:

Risking Groundwater Contamination From Pesticides on Long Island Golf Courses

This report examines the extent of pesticide use on Long Island golf courses and the

potential for groundwater contamination and the resulting environmental harm and health risks. It includes findings from the first comprehensive survey of actual pesticide use on golf courses on Long Island. Before explaining why Long Island was chosen as the focus for this study, it is important to understand how pesticides are used on golf courses and what dangers such use poses.

Introduction

In recent years, many Americans have asked questions about the safety of pesticides not only in our foods, but also in and around our homes and workplaces. Although pesticides permeate our everyday lives, we don't know enough about the dangers of pesticide exposure. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which regulates pesticides, is currently reviewing the data on the health and environmental effects of some pesticides to decide whether these products should be continued to be used. In the meantime, thousands of pesticides still under review are freely marketed--unless the EPA decides to restrict or eliminate their use. So far, only one of the 34 most commonly used pesticides for turf and lawn care has completed this review.

The bottom line is that consumers do not know all the questions associated with pesticide use. Most important, no one has all the answers--not the manufacturers, not the EPA.

In fact, when the EPA permits a pesticide to be sold in the United States, the Agency does not decide that the product poses no environmental or health threats. The federal pesticide law, known as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) which gives the EPA authority over pesticides, requires the EPA only to decide that the pesticide poses "no *unreasonable* risk" (emphasis added) to public health or the environment, based on its perceived economic, social and environmental costs and benefits. Before the EPA may register a pesticide and allow it onto the market, the agency must first determine that the risks are worth the benefits. But as more and more is learned about the extent of these risks--including the groundwater threat--this balancing act may tilt in the opposite direction, against the use of certain pesticides.

Unfortunately, it may be quite a while before the EPA restricts or bans certain pesticides that do pose an "unreasonable" risk. The EPA is requiring pesticide companies to supply additional data on potential risks of their products. The Agency will review the adequacy of this data as part of the pesticide re-registration process and this will most likely continue into the next century. An example of the new data requirement came in response to a 1987 petition submitted jointly by several environmental groups, the New York State Attorney General's Office and others, requesting EPA to perform tests for the neurotoxic effects (effects on the nervous system) of some pesticides. The EPA is now planning to require that pesticide manufacturers conduct such tests but it may be years before the public knows the full neurotoxic potential of pesticides now in use.

Several pesticides on the market have been identified as probable human carcinogens and some have been linked to birth defects, nervous system disorders and reproductive problems. In addition, as this report will discuss, pesticide use has the potential to threaten wildlife and contaminate natural resources. People can be exposed to pesticides in the water they drink, or through direct skin contact, inhalation or in the food they consume.

Although the risks of using pesticides to grow food crops may be worthwhile to ensure a continuing food

supply, most people would agree that the benefits of pesticides used merely to produce green lawns and turf are far less. Despite the relatively limited benefits of turf and lawn care pesticides, three to six times as much pesticides are used per acre on home lawns than to grow the food we eat.⁽¹⁾ As shown later in this report, golf courses on Long Island use almost four to seven times the average amount of pesticides used in agriculture, on a pound per acre basis.

In order to maintain the greens and fairways, many golf course managers apply huge amounts of pesticides following a pre-determined "recipe" of repeated applications, rather than customized treatments addressing actual problems. Many pesticides are used preventively, not in response to specific problems. Ironically, this can eventually turn into a pesticide addiction, which may require increasing amounts or different types of pesticides to produce the same results. Increased application rates further contribute to the potential threats to public health and the environment.

Who can be exposed to pesticides used on golf courses? Anyone on the golf course or nearby is at risk. Pesticide applicators, either professional contractors or golf course workers, can be exposed to these poisons during storage, mixing and application. Golfers, often playing shortly after pesticides have been applied, can be exposed directly to the pesticides on the turf, as well as to pesticide vapors and mists. People living near a golf course may be affected by sprays and dusts blown from the golf course onto their property and into their homes. Finally, pesticides applied to the turf may run off into surface waters or leach down to groundwater, which can then expose people to contaminated drinking water. These people may live far from the place where pesticides were used.

Unfortunately, neither the state or federal government require advance notification to the public of all pesticide applications, so that people can be exposed to pesticides without their knowledge.

In 1979, high levels of the pesticide aldicarb (Temik) were found in public and private drinking water wells in Suffolk County. The manufacturer provided wellhead treatment to remove the pollution. After a persistent degradation product of an herbicide called Dacthal (chlorthalodimethyl or DCPA) was recently applied on Long Island, the chemical was detected in drinking water wells at levels 20 times above the State safe drinking water standards. In addition to Dacthal and Temik contamination, by 1988, 9 other pesticides or their degradation products had been detected in Long Island's groundwater. Two of these pesticides (chlorothalonil and Dacthal) are frequently used in turf care. Another 13 have been detected intermittently and more testing is necessary to verify their continuing presence in groundwater.⁽²⁾ Temik can no longer be used in Suffolk County. In 1988, one Dacthal manufacturer (ISK Biotech) voluntarily restricted its Dacthal products from use in Suffolk County; however, other companies have not. This restriction should be extended to all products containing Dacthal.

WHY LONG ISLAND?

The Attorney General's office decided to examine pesticide use on Long Island golf courses because pesticides pose special risks on the Island. Long Island's nearly three million people depend on groundwater as their only source of drinking water. This irreplaceable resource is vulnerable to contamination by surface-applied pesticides. Large areas of the island's groundwater lie beneath a sandy, porous surface soil layer with little organic matter to adsorb pesticides. This type of soil provides little if any barrier against contaminants reaching the groundwater.

Currently, groundwater monitoring for pesticides in Suffolk County is limited primarily to those pesticides used in agriculture. In Nassau County however, which has very little agricultural acreage, there is no comparable monitoring program for agricultural pesticides. All public drinking water supplies in New York State (including those in Long Island) must be tested regularly for the pesticides endrin, lindane, toxaphene, 2,4,5-TP, 2,4-D and methoxychlor. In Nassau and Suffolk counties, public drinking water supplies are also routinely tested for aldrin, dieldrin, DDT, chlordane, heptachlor, and heptachlor epoxide. In addition, Suffolk tests regularly for alachlor, aldicarb and several other related pesticides, EDB, endosulfan and 1,2-dichloropropane. Most of these pesticides are either no longer in use or have severely restricted uses. Apart from 2,4-D, they are not used in turf care. The EPA has recently conducted a "National Survey of Agricultural Pesticides in Groundwater" but only eight water samples were taken from Nassau County and none from Suffolk. Two of the eight samples contained residues of chlorthal dimethyl (Dacthal).

However, there is no comprehensive and targeted program for monitoring Long Island's groundwater for the vast majority of turf care pesticides used on Long Island. As a result, there is no way to determine whether contamination may have reached the aquifer in some locations.

This survey provides the first report on the extent of pesticide use in one specific area, golf courses, and also offers the first estimates of the potential for harm to the groundwater from golf course pesticides. No conclusions are drawn concerning any *present* danger to consumers of the groundwater. There is no reason to believe that any water now supplied to Long Island exceeds safe drinking water guidelines for any pesticides. The purpose here is to show the potential for damage to the groundwater resource due to long-term use of pesticides in sensitive areas, which may at some time affect the drinking water of Long Island's nearly three million people.

Although Long Island's geology and the dependence of such a large population on a single source of drinking water is unusual, groundwater quality in other areas of the state may also be jeopardized by pesticide use. Thus, the concerns raised in this report could apply to several other parts of the state where turf care pesticides are heavily used over aquifers.

Survey Methods

The Attorney General's survey of pesticides used on Long Island golf courses provides the basis for an initial evaluation of potential impacts on groundwater. In 1990, the Attorney General's office surveyed 107 private and public golf courses in Nassau and Suffolk counties (as listed in the Glasheen *1989 Golf Course Guide for the New York City Area*) to determine the identity, amounts and patterns of use of pesticides on golf courses. After the initial mailing, follow-up mail and telephone inquiries were made to increase responses. A total of 58 surveys were returned but six responses were incomplete and unusable. ([Table 1](#) on the next page provides a list of the 52 golf courses providing usable responses.)

**TABLE 1:
TOTAL PESTICIDE USAGE BY 52 LONG ISLAND GOLF COURSES
(1989 unless indicated)**

PRIVATE GOLF COURSES				PUBLIC GOLF COURSES			
MAP	GOLF	TOTAL	POUNDS	MAP	GOLF	TOTAL	POUNDS

NO.*	COURSE	ACRES	APPLIED	NO.*	COURSE	ACRES	APPLIED
15	Nassau Golf Course	180	2386	30	Eisenhower Park	300	1492
25	Woodcrest Club	122	2333	29	Bethpage	875	1480
21	Mill River Club	125	2299	64	Hauppague Country Club	135	1341
24	Tam O'Shanter Golf Course	169	2081	104	Montauk Downs Golf Course (1988)	254	989
88	National Golf Links	165	2070	46	Jones Beach	130	574
48	Huntington Country Club	90	2064	44	Lido Golf Course	144	490
53	Southward Ho Country Club	151	1983	83	Indian Island	157	472
4	North Hills Country Club (1988)	148	1721	62	Brentwood Country Club	110	385
6	IBM Country Club**	210	1707	56	Crab Meadow Country Club	79	377
20	Old Westbury Golf&Country Club	198	1696	13	Glen Cove Golf Course	122	345
49	Cold Springs Country Club	135	1647	78	Swan Lake Country Club	144	293
11	Engineers Country Club	122	1614	61	Hamlet Golf&Country Club	180	268
23	Muttontown Golf&Country Club	140	1611	67 Timber Point	239	192	
40	Rockaway Hunting	200	1587	82	Sandy Pond	75	177
22	Pine Hollow Country Club	160	1525	47	Peninsula Golf Course (1990)	50	172
36	Inwood Country Club	164	1446	63	Robert Moses	18	169

8	North Hempstead Country Club (1990)	110	1403	93	Poxaboque Golf Course	82	131
34	Hempstead Golf Course	120	1381	69	West Sayville	250	95
18	Brookville Country Club	116	1326	45	Merrick Rd. Park	61	88
71	St. George's Golf & Country Club	100	1176	51	Bergen Point	240	53
38	Lawrence Village Golf Course	120	1119	98	Cedars Golf Club (1990)	27	15
100	Gardiners Bay Country Club	118	1028	94	Sag Harbor Golf Course	68	0
1	Lake Success	120	857				
43	Middle Bay Country Club	120	792				
17	Cedarbrook Country Club (1990)	120	474				
90	Southampton Golf Course	130	404				
105	Blue Ridge Golf Course	32	297				
86	Westhampton Country Club	120	212				
102	Hay Harbor Golf Course (1990)	45	102				
87	Quogue Field Club	82	93				

* Corresponds to location shown on map, page 11.

** IBM Country Club reported treating 210 acres of which 60 comprised its golf course.

The Attorney General's office determined the identities and concentrations of "active" ingredients in each of the products used. The "active" ingredients are the chemicals in the

product intended to kill pests. Pesticide manufacturers must identify the chemicals used as active ingredients on the product label, as well as their concentration. Since other ingredients, known as "inert" ingredients, are generally not identified, our calculations of pesticide use refer only to the active ingredient portion of the pesticides applied to the golf courses. "Inert" components are not necessarily non-toxic, nor can they be assumed to pose no threat to groundwater quality. Because their identity is treated as confidential business information by the EPA, their potential to contaminate groundwater cannot be evaluated.

Summary of Survey Results

The 52 golf courses reported using a total of approximately 200,000 pounds of bulk dry products and close to 9,000 gallons of bulk liquid formulations in one year. This included 192 different pesticide products containing 50 different active ingredients which totalled more than 50,000 pounds. (Table 2 on the next page provides the names and amounts of the active ingredients reported.)

If these 50,000 pounds were applied evenly across the total area of the 52 golf courses, it would amount to an average of 7 pounds of pesticides per acre annually. By comparison, a national average of 1.5 pounds of pesticides per acre are applied in agriculture annually.⁽³⁾ The actual rate of golf course pesticide use may be much higher than seven pounds per acre, since the playing surfaces that are treated make up only a portion of the golf courses' total acreage. A comparison of pesticide usage in agriculture and golf course maintenance which is based on the acreage actually treated with pesticides is even more alarming. Based on responses to our survey, pesticides were applied to only about 50 percent of the total acreage of Long Island golf courses. By contrast, pesticides are applied to about 62 percent of all agricultural land. Using these figures, the average golf course application rate increases to 18 pounds of pesticides per treated acre per year, about seven times the agricultural rate of 2.7 pounds per treated acre per year.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, between four and seven times as much pesticides are used on Long Island golf courses than are applied on food crops. (On the average, public golf courses used far less pesticides than private golf courses and fungicidal pesticides were far more heavily used than either herbicides or insecticides.)

By comparison, when homeowners follow the directions for various annual do-it-yourself lawn care programs, they may apply from 3.2 to 9.8 pounds of pesticide per acre annually. Thus, homeowners may apply up to 3.6 times as much pesticides as is typically used in agriculture. Even at that level, they apply less pesticides than golf courses.

**TABLE 2:
PESTICIDES USED BY 52 LONG ISLAND GOLF COURSES**

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS	TRADE NAMES	# OF USERS	PESTICIDES APPLIED (LBS.)
FUNGICIDES			
chlorothalonil	Daconil 2787	37	8768
anilazine	Dyrene	27	4733

iprodione	Chipco 26019	40	3491
mancozeb	Fore,Dithne,Manzate 2000DF	19	3008
propamocarb HCL	Banol	24	2219
triadimefon	Bayleton	47	1875
benomyl	Tersan 1991	32	1746
metalaxyl	Subdue	27	1427
PCNB	Turfcide	10	1419
fosetyl-Al	Aliette	9	965
chloroneb	Tersan SP, Terremec SP	8	633
thiram	Spot-Trete	11	591
maneb	Tersan LSR	8	549
propiconazole	Banner	13	509
thiophanate-methyl	3336	12	330
fenarimol	Rubigan	22	174
vinclozolin	Vorlan	6	127
captan	Captan	2	28
cadmium chloride	Caddy	7	22
cycloheximide	Act-Dion T6F	1	0
TOTAL			32,614
HERBICIDES			
bensulide	Betasan	30	2174
chlorthal dimethyl	Dacthal	12	1789
glyphosate	Roundup, Rodeo	12	496
2,4-D acid	Trimec	28	461
mecoprop	MCPPP, Mecomex	24	365
benfluralin	Balan, Team 2G	17	364
siduron	Turpersan	5	323
paclobutrazol	Scotts PCA	6	150
trifluralin	Team 2G	10	121
2,4-D amine salt	Trexsan, Trimec Bent	3	107
pendimethalin	Scotts Weed Control	4	79
dicamba	Banvel	22	71
oxadiazon	Ronstar	7	65

oryzalin	Surflan	2	54
prometon	Pramitol 25E	2	32
fenoxyprop-ethyl	Acclaim	13	18
diquat	Diquat	2	17
dichlobenil	Dyclomec	2	10
2,4-Dp	Chipco Weedone	1	6
melfluidide	Embark	3	5
ethofumesate	Prograss	3	5
TOTAL			6,712
INSECTICIDES			
bendiocarb	Turcam	25	3371
trichlorfon	Dylox,Proxol 80SP	26	2793
chlorpyrifos	Dursban	42	2006
isofenfos	Oftanol	24	1739
carbaryl	Sevin	18	776
DDVP	Dursban plus	4	13
propoxur	Baygon	1	11
disulfoton	Disyston	1	2
TOTAL			10,710
TOTAL COMBINED PESTICIDES			50,035

Several of the pesticides (or their degradation products) applied on golf courses on Long Island in 1989 were then classified as probable or possible carcinogens:

Six pesticides (propoxur, DDVP, oryzalin, trifluralin, fosetyl-Al and chlorothalonil), totalling 9,932 pounds or 19.8 percent of the total active ingredients applied, were classified by the EPA as possible or probable human carcinogens.⁽⁵⁾ (Chlorothalonil is the most heavily used fungicide on Long Island golf courses and has also been detected in Long Island's groundwater.)

Another three (trichlorfon, mancozeb, maneb), totalling 6,350 pounds or 12.7 percent of the total active ingredients applied, naturally break down in the environment into various compounds including substances the EPA classifies as probable human carcinogens.

One active ingredient, Dacthal, with 1,789 pounds used or 3.6 percent of the total active ingredients applied, has been found by the EPA to be contaminated with traces of dioxin, a probable human carcinogen. (Dacthal was the second most heavily used herbicide on Long Island golf courses responding to the survey and its persistent degradation product has also been detected in Long Island's groundwater)

Five more (oxadiazon, benomyl, metalaxyl, pentachloronitrobenzene, captan) totalling 4,685 pounds or 9.4 percent of the total active ingredients applied, were being reviewed by the EPA for carcinogenicity.

Long-term, low-level exposure to many of the pesticides used by Long Island golf courses is associated with a variety of other health problems. This is the type of exposure generally resulting from drinking contaminated groundwater. According to the EPA, some of these chemicals can impair the nervous system, while others may damage the kidneys, liver, thyroid and adrenal glands, and the blood. Some cause degeneration of the testes, decreased sperm counts, reduction in weight of the uterus, and decreased birth weight. ([Table 3](#), on the next page, lists some of the known long-term health effects associated with some of the pesticides applied on Long Island golf courses.)

Since the health risks of chronic, long-term exposure to many pesticides are not fully understood, any discussion of these effects will be incomplete. It may take many more years of research before the full range of these effects is known.

The potential for these health effects depend on whether, and how, people are exposed to these pesticides. Many of the pesticides used can contaminate the groundwater which in turn may end up as drinking water.

TABLE 3: Selected Health Effects of Active Ingredients of Pesticides Applied on Long Island Golf Courses

Active Ingredient	Potential Health Effects*
Benfluralin	Decreases red blood cell count and hemoglobin concentration
Benomyl	Causes low birth weight
Chlorpyrifos	Impairs nervous system function
Dicamba	Toxic to fetus
Diquat	Causes cataracts
Disulfoton	Impairs nervous system function;causes optic nerve degeneration
Pendimethalin	Toxic to liver
Propoxur	Impairs nervous system function
Thiophanate-methyl	Decreases sperm formation, causes hyperthyroidism
Thiram	Toxic to nervous system
Triadimefon	Decreases red blood cell count

* These are some health effects identified by the EPA that can result from sufficient oral exposure to the pesticides listed, including exposure from drinking water. Exposure to these pesticides by inhalation or direct contact and/or at higher concentrations could cause more severe

health problems. (Source: Oral Reference Doses, Integrated Risk Information System, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1991)

According to a 1991 report on pesticides in groundwater by the U.S. General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, at least six of the pesticides used by Long Island golf courses are already known to be capable of contaminating groundwater after normal applications following label directions. These six pesticides are: chlorothalonil, Dacthal, dicamba, 2,4-D, prometon and trifluralin. They accounted for 11,349 pounds or 22.6 percent of the pesticides used by the 52 golf courses in the survey. By 1988, the degradation products of two of these (chlorothalonil and Dacthal) had been detected in Long Island groundwater at the highest levels anywhere in the country.

Long Island's groundwater aquifers are replenished in the deep flow recharge areas. It is in these areas that precipitation infiltrates and trickles down through the soil and replenishes the Magothy and Lloyd aquifers, upon which the residents of Long Island depend for their drinking water supplies. An estimated 53 golf courses covering 7,294 acres are located within these deep flow recharge areas. Another 54 golf courses are estimated to cover 6,286 acres outside the deep flow recharge areas (see map on page 11, and map key in the Appendix). Although pesticide use by golf courses outside the recharge areas are less likely to affect the two deeper drinking water aquifers, it may contaminate the Upper Glacial aquifer which is used for both shallow private wells and even a few public supply wells.

Pesticides, like other chemicals, may vary in their potential to leach, or to migrate through soils. In the absence of groundwater monitoring studies, this potential can still be estimated. [Table 4](#) presents estimates of this potential, based on a leachability rating system adopted by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The "leachability" ratings in this table consider pesticide persistence and mobility, and represent different probabilities for groundwater contamination. Pesticide applicators can use [Table 4](#) as a guide for selecting pesticides that pose the least risk of groundwater contamination. This information can also be used to decide which pesticides should be monitored in groundwater.

The actual impact of the pesticide on groundwater is influenced by several additional factors including the type and thickness of the surface soil in the area where the pesticide is applied. As noted earlier, Long Island's soils are generally a poor barrier to contaminant migration. Long Island's vulnerability to groundwater contamination by pesticides is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that degradation products two of the pesticides (chlorothalonil and Dacthal) that are rated in [Table 4](#) as having a "small" leaching potential have nevertheless already reached Long Island's groundwater (see discussion on page 3).

TABLE 4
Pesticide Leaching Potential

LARGE	MEDIUM	SMALL	VERY SMALL
dicamba	2,4-D amine salt	2,4-D acid	diquat
dichlobenil	bendiocarb	2,4-DP	glyphosate

ethofumesate	chloroneb	anilazine	propamocarb HCL
fenarimol	isofenfos	benfluralin	vinclozolin
metalaxyl	propiconazole	benomyl	
prometon	siduron	bensulide	
propoxur	triadimefon	captan	
trichlorfon		carbaryl	
		chlorothalonil	
		chlorpyrifos	
		Dacthol	
		disulfoton	
		fosetyl-Al	
		iprodione	
		mancozed	
		maneb	
		oryzalin	
		oxadiazon	
		PCNB	
		pendimethalin	
		thiophanate-methyl	
		thiram	
		trifluralin	

Source: SCS/ARS/CES Pesticide Properties Database, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, 1991

Other Potential Dangers of Golf Course Pesticides

Unfortunately, the potential adverse impacts of pesticides heavily applied on golf courses are not limited to the possibility that they may contaminate underground water supplies. People and the environment are not immune to many effects of pesticides. Millions of Americans may be sensitive to pesticides. Some of those afflicted with such reactions go to extraordinary lengths--greatly disrupting their lives--to avoid even the slightest chance of unwitting exposure. And still people continue to be poisoned by pesticides at work, at play and in the comfort of their own homes.

In addition to long-term health effects of pesticides like cancer, recently there have been various reports of people suffering immediate health problems after exposure to pesticides. In one extremely unusual case in 1982, Navy Lieutenant George Prior died two weeks after he spent

three consecutive days playing golf at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. His doctor, an expert forensic pathologist, reported that Prior suffered a severe reaction to chlorothalonil, a pesticide used weekly on the golf course.

In 1990, workers at Cornell University suffered attacks of vomiting, blurred vision, and headaches after the building where they were working was sprayed with an insecticide. Because of the growing number of these reports, last year New York State instituted a toll-free pesticide poisonings registry to keep track of these incidents. Pesticide poisonings must now be reported to the Department of Health's Pesticide Poisoning Registry at 1-800-322-6850 1-800-322-6850 .

Pesticides have also hurt the environment. Several years ago, more than 700 Brant geese were killed after absorbing diazinon from a Long Island golf course. Shortly after, New York State forbade the use of diazinon on golf courses.

Recommendations

If there is any doubt that Long Island's groundwater needs special protection, the fate of groundwater in Brooklyn and Queens is an unfortunate reminder of the consequences of inaction and neglect. All of Long Island (Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, Suffolk) shares the same regional groundwater aquifer system. Groundwater in Brooklyn and Queens was a source of drinking water from colonial times until well into this century. Yet because the vulnerability of this resource was not understood, it was not protected from the ravages of commercial and industrial development and burgeoning population growth. For example, an underground pool of about 10 million gallons of oil and gasoline under the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn has contaminated the Upper Glacial aquifer. Today, except for the groundwater under a small section of southeastern Queens, the groundwater in Brooklyn and Queens is not used for drinking water.

Despite this sobering lesson, government has yet to address groundwater contamination by pesticides *before* it happens. Instead, pesticide contamination has been responded to--after the fact--with band-aid measures that only address the immediate problem, not its source. Contaminated water has been replaced with bottled or tank-truck water or individual households have received drinking water filters that require ongoing maintenance. Affected public supply wells have been closed or fitted with expensive filters. Temik and Dacthal were banned for use in Suffolk County only after widespread contamination had occurred. However, such measures are no substitute for keeping groundwater clean by preventing future pesticide contamination. Yet the federal EPA, the agency with primary regulatory authority over pesticides, has made only limited prevention efforts. It has recognized that pesticide applications can jeopardize water quality and recently announced that it will take action to reduce the threat. However, the Agency has reviewed only about one-third of the studies submitted on the leaching characteristics of 16 pesticides *known* to contaminate groundwater. The EPA has determined that 40 percent of the studies are inadequate and must be supplemented or repeated. It will be years before the EPA has the full data requested in order to evaluate the threat of groundwater contamination. Until the data is complete and fully evaluated, the EPA should take interim action to prevent further

groundwater contamination.

The State Legislature has already acted to protect Long Island's groundwater from some threats by ordering all landfills to close because of the danger they posed by leaking contaminants. The Legislature also enacted legislation banning certain septic tank cleaners on Long Island. But further action is needed.

To protect the public health and natural resources like Long Island's groundwater from the risks of pesticide contamination, the following measures should be taken in several areas.

Reducing Pesticide Hazards

The use of pesticides containing known or probable carcinogens for aesthetic purposes such as golf courses or lawn care should be eliminated. The risks posed by these carcinogens are not outweighed by the benefits of an aesthetically pleasing green lawn.

Pesticide users, particularly golf course management, both public and private, should consider the leachability and toxicity of pesticides they apply and avoid those with significant potential toxic effects.

Efficacy should not be the only reason for choosing a pesticide.

Groundwater quality should be monitored for pesticide contamination, particularly in groundwater recharge areas where pesticides are known to be applied in large quantities, such as Long Island golf courses.

As suggested by the GAO, the EPA should require groundwater advisories on the labels of pesticides known to cause widespread groundwater contamination.

The GAO also suggests that the EPA prohibit the use of pesticides known to leach into groundwater wherever groundwater is particularly vulnerable to pesticide contamination.

The GAO further suggests that the EPA permit only certified pesticide applicators to use those pesticides that leach into groundwater.

Minimizing Pesticide Use

All pesticide applicators, including golf course managers and homeowners, should use less toxic alternatives and "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) practices to minimize the amounts of toxic chemicals applied.

Pesticide applicators should advise consumers that reduced or non-chemical alternatives to pesticides are available, so that consumers may choose to use such alternatives.

Full Disclosure

Pesticide labels should inform users that any pesticide use may pose potential health and environmental risks.

Pesticide labels should state clearly that registration is not a guarantee that pesticide use is free from risk.

The public should receive advance notice of pesticide applications in public buildings and places such as golf courses. Then people can make their own, informed choices about whether they want to risk exposure.

Implementing these recommendations cannot reverse past pesticide contamination. However, protection of our drinking water resources today will help ensure a continuing and safe water supply for future generations.

Endnotes:

1. Time Magazine, June 3, 1991
2. Status: Pesticide Sampling Programs, 1980-1988, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, July 1989.
3. D. Pimentel et al., "Environmental and Economic Impacts of Reducing U.S. Agricultural Pesticide Use," *Handbook of Pest Management in Agriculture*, 2nd edition, edited by David Pimentel, CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida, 1991, page 679.
4. D. Pimentel et al., op cit.
5. As of August 1995, each of these active ingredients was still classified as a possible or probable carcinogen by EPA.
6. As mentioned earlier, one Dacthal manufacturer has voluntarily restricted its Dacthal products from use in Suffolk County. However, products containing Dacthal made by other companies or stocks purchased before the restriction took effect in 1988 can still be used in Suffolk County.
7. As of August 1995, EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs listed captan as a probable carcinogen and oxadiazon, benomyl and pentachloronitrobenzene as possible carcinogens. Metalaxyl was listed as having evidence of "noncarcinogenicity for humans."

Credits

This report was originally prepared by Environmental Scientist Patricia Primi, Chief Scientist Michael H. Sorgan, Ph.D., Assistant Attorneys General Deborah I. Volberg and James A. Sevinsky and other staff of the Environmental Protection Bureau.

Appendix

KEY TO NASSAU COUNTY GOLF COURSES

Loc. #	Name	Town	Holes	Acres	Public/Private
1	Lake Success	Great Neck	18	120	private
2	Fresh Meadow	Great Neck	18	140	private
3	Deepdale	Manhasset	18	150	private
4	North Hills	Manhasset	18	148	private
5	Sands Point	Sands Point	18	130	private
6	IBM	Port Washington	9	60	private
7	Plandome C.C.	Plandome	18	110	private
8	North Hempstead	Port Washington	18	110	private
9	Christopher Morley Pk	North Hills	9	43	public
10	Wheatley Hills	East Williston	18	120	private
11	Engineers C.C.	Roslyn Harbor	18	122	private
12	North Shore C.C.	Glen Head	18	150	private
13	Glen Cove	Glen Cove	18	122	public
14	The Creek Club	Locust Valley	18	90	private
15	Nassau C.C.	Glen Cove	18	180	private
16	Glen Head C.C.	Glen Head	18	168	private
17	The Cedar Brook Club	Old Brookville	18	120	private
18	Brookville C.C.	Glen Head	18	116	private
19	Piping Rock Club	Locust Valley	18	178	private
20	Old Westbury	Old Westbury	27	198	private
21	Mill River Club	Oyster Bay	18	125	private
22	Pine Hollow C.C.	East Norwich	18	160	private
23	Muttontown	East Norwich	18	140	private
24	Tam O'Shanter	Brookville	18	169	private
25	Woodcrest Club	Syosset	18	122	private
26	Meadow Brook Club	Jericho	18	125	private
27	Glen Oaks	Old Westbury	27	250	private
28	Cantiague Park	Hicksville	9	42	public
29	Bethpage State Park	Farmingdale	90	875	public
30	Eisenhower Park	East Meadow	54	300	public
31	Garden City C.C.	Garden City	18	150	private
32	Garden City G.C.	Garden City	18	112	private
33	Cherry Valley	Garden City	18	143	private

34	Hempstead	Hempstead	18	120	private
35	Rockville Links	Rockville Ctr.	18	180	private
36	Inwood	Inwood	18	164	private
37	North Woodmere Park	N. Woodmere	9	50	public
38	Lawrence	Lawrence	18	120	private
39	Woodmere	Woodmere	18	110	private
40	Rockaway Hunting Club	Cedarhurst	18	200	private
41	Seawane Club	Hewlett Harbor	18	130	private
42	Bay Park	E. Rockaway	9	50	public
43	Middle Bay C.C.	Oceanside	18	120	private
44	Lido Golf Club	Lido Beach	18	144	public
45	Merrick Rd. Park	Merrick	9	61	public
46	Jones Beach State Park	Wantagh	18	130	public
47	Peninsula	Massapequa	9	50	public

KEY TO SUFFOLK COUNTY GOLF COURSES

Loc. #	Name	Town	Holes	Acres	Public/Private
48	Huntington C.C.	Huntington	18	90	private
49	Cold Spring C.C.	Cold Sprng Hrbr	18	135	private
50	Huntington Crescent	Huntington	18	190	private
51	Bergen Point C.C.	Babylon	18	240	public
52	Cedar Beach	Babylon	9	20	public
53	Southward Ho	Bayshore	18	151	private
54	Half Hollow Hills	Dix Hills	9	41	public
55	Dix Hills	Dix Hills	9	30	public
56	Crab Meadow	Northport	18	79	public
57	Northport VA Hospital	Northport	9	28	public
58	Indian Hill	Northport	18	143	private
59	Sunken Meadow	Kings Park	27	250	public
60	Dix Hills Park	Dix Hills	9	36	public
61	The Hamlet	Commack	18	180	public
62	Brentwood C.C.	Brentwood	18	110	public
63	Robert Moses	Babylon	9	18	public
64	Hauppague	Hauppauge	18	135	public
65	Smithtown Landing	Smithtown	27	40	public

66	Colonie Hill	Hauppauge	18	90	private
67	Timber Point	Great River	27	239	public
68	Nissequogue	St. James	18	125	private
69	West Sayville	West Sayville	18	250	public
70	Island Hills C.C.	Sayville	18	110	private
71	St. Georges	Stony Brook	18	100	private
72	Heatherwood	Centereach	18	70	public
73	Harbor Hills	Port Jefferson	18	40	private
74	Bellport	Bellport	18	98	public
75	Tall Tree	Rocky Point	18	146	public
76	Spring Lake	Middle Island	27	260	public
77	Middle Island	Middle Island	27	226	public
78	Swan Lake	Manorville	18	144	public
79	Pine Hills	Manorville	18	133	public
80	Rock Hill	Manorville	18	125	private
81	Fox Hill	Baiting Hollow	18	140	private
82	Sandy Pond	Riverhead	9	75	public
83	Indian Island	Riverhead	18	157	public
84	Hampton Hills	Riverhead	18	60	private
85	L.I. Wyandanch Club	Eastport	9	63	public
86	Westhampton	Westhmptn Bch.	18	120	private
87	Quogue Field Club	Quogue	9	82	private
88	National Golf Links	Southampton	18	165	private
89	Shinnecock Hills	Southampton	18	96	private
90	Southampton	Southampton	18	130	private
91	Noyac	Sag Harbor	18	102	private
92	Bridgehampton	Bridgehampton	9	66	private
93	Poxabogue	Bridgehampton	9	82	public
94	Sag Harbor	Sag Harbor	9	68	public
95	Maidstone	East Hampton	27	120	private
96	South Fork	Amagansett	9	40	private
97	North Fork	Cutchogue	18	130	private
98	Cedars	Cutchogue	9	27	public
99	Shelter Island	Shelter Island	9	61	public

100	Gardiners Bay	Shelter Island	18	118	private
101	Islands End	Greenport	18	108	private
102	Hay Harbor	Fishers Island	9	45	private
103	Fishers Island	Fishers Island	18	130	private
104	Montauk Downs	Montauk	18	254	public
105	Blue Ridge	Medford	9	32	private
106	Gull Haven	Central Islip	9	60	private
107	Leisure Village	Ridge	9	60	private