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- [Blog](#)
- [Just the facts](#)

Media responses

[HOME](#) > [MEDIA](#) > [MEDIA RESPONSES](#) > [RE: PESTICIDE MANUFACTURERS TRY TO LOOK GREEN, KELOWNA CAPITAL NEWS, MARCH 15, 2012](#)

Re: Pesticide manufacturers try to look green, Kelowna Capital News, March 15, 2012



April 3, 2012

I really enjoyed being able to be part of an event featuring a multitude of views on how we can build sustainable communities. Congratulations to the organizers of the Building Sustainable Communities Conference for their foresight and interest in this topic and bringing together such a range of delegates to speak on the topic.

As I mentioned at the conference, farmers are the original environmentalists and have a track record of producing safe, affordable and nutritious food for Canadians and others around the world. Plant science technologies help farmers do this and the tools they rely on are safe.

When it comes to the health and safety of pesticides and plant biotechnology, both technologies are federally regulated to ensure they are safe for people, the planet and beneficial insects.

All crops derived from plant biotechnology are subject to extensive safety reviews that are completed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada. Before any pesticide can be used in Canada, it must first be approved by Health Canada. This process involves a comprehensive set of over 200 tests. For both technologies, only those products that meet Health Canada's strict health and safety standards are registered for sale and use.

In Canada, farmers choose to grow genetically improved varieties of seeds and use pesticides to protect their crops from insect, weed and disease infestations because of the numerous benefits they see such as increased yields and environmental sustainability.

Take for instance conservation tillage which is made possible because of pesticides and plant biotechnology. This practice saves 116 million litres of fuel from being used each year and in 2008, 12 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide was prevented from entering the atmosphere.

The plant science industry also operates world leading environmental stewardship programs that B.C. farmers participate in such as safely disposing of old and unwanted pesticides and recycling empty pesticide containers into items that can be used back in the farm.

The fact of the matter is that it's responsible on the part of the organizers of the conference to provide various organizations the opportunity to participate in the conversation and contribute to solutions. It's just too bad that some people are so caught up in their own biases that they aren't open to learning new information.

Sincerely,

Lorne Hepworth
President, CropLife Canada – representing the plant science industry

Just the Facts

Did you know that farmers produce almost twice as much canola thanks to pesticides and biotechnology? Think about how much more heart-healthy canola oil that is!

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