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5-day Forecast

Friday

45° 27°

Saturday

45° 32°

Sunday

45° 32°

Monday

45° 35°

Tuesday

45° 37°

Eugene: **30°F**, [mostly cloudy](#)

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GUEST VIEWPOINT: State's response to child's positive pesticide test: Don't worry

By Lisa Arkin

Published: (Thursday, Dec 22, 2011 05:00AM) *Midnight*, Dec 22

What if our government knew that a threat to human safety existed in Lane County? Would we expect it to take action to protect us?

Our state and federal governments recently informed dozens of Lane County residents that poisonous pesticides have been found in their bodies.

On Dec. 15, the Oregon Health Authority and the federal Centers for Disease Control told a mother in Lane County that test results show residues of 2,4-D, a powerful pesticide, in urine samples drawn from her and her children (as well as dozens of other members of her rural community). The samples were taken in response to reports that families have been sickened from exposure to pesticides sprayed by helicopter over hundreds of acres of forest land. These industrial chemicals are sprayed by timber companies attempting to kill grass and brush.

That mother was told she need not worry that her children are carrying 2,4-D in their bodies, because it is becoming more common to find 2,4-D residues in urine samples across the United States.

It may appear at first glance that having 2,4-D in a flask of a child's urine on a lab bench is not such a big deal. However, to a mother who gets that report about her child, it is disturbing.

And it should be disturbing. She knows the contents of the flask are the endpoint of the pesticides that are inside her child's bladder, after the kidneys have filtered it from the blood. Upstream from there, those pesticides circulated in the child's bloodstream, bathing every cell with some quantity of pesticide.

She knows, and research confirms, that children are much more vulnerable to harm from pesticides than adults. Such harm may come in the form of learning disabilities, reproductive disorders or cancer later in their lives.

Yet government agents had the audacity to tell a mother that it is not worrisome, because other people also have 2,4-D in their bloodstreams.

A government's most fundamental responsibility is to protect its citizens from physical harm. A case in point is the medical and economic history of lead.

Lead used to be ubiquitous in gasoline and paints until it was discovered that children were suffering irreparable neurologic harm from lead exposure. At first, government agencies told parents not to worry. Since then, though, lead has been banned in consumer products and society rightly has declared a policy of zero tolerance for lead poisoning in children.

Not unlike the story of lead in gasoline, Lane County timber companies broadcast pesticides over thousands of acres of land until they are omnipresent in the environment. Pesticides are sprayed by helicopter, just as the military used Agent Orange to defoliate jungles in Vietnam. These dangerous chemicals travel far from where they are sprayed, eventually falling over rivers, homes and schools and exposing families through contaminated air and water.

When government agencies announced they would conduct testing of atrazine and 2,4-D in the fall of 2011, a group of Lane County timber companies cleverly decided simply to not use these two chemicals during the testing period. By choosing not to spray those particular pesticides this year, timber corporations conceded that detectable levels would show up in people's bodies, presenting a difficult public relations problem.

Despite the timber companies' efforts to thwart the study, though, the government's new test results prove that these herbicides are still in people's bodies — even a child's body. Even the Environmental Protection Agency does not know if there are "safe" levels in humans. The International Agency for Research on Cancer considers 2,4-D as possibly carcinogenic to humans.

But here in Oregon, mothers are told not to worry that 2,4-D is circulating in their children's bodies. Health authorities, who should put health protection first, told this mother, "These exposures are occurring as a result of ... economic conditions under which our present world is defined." Mothers may ask: Does that trump the fundamental right of all children to live in a healthy environment?

In promoting the economic interests of a highly influential and powerful fraternity of timber corporations, policymakers and health officials are acting without consideration for that child with 2,4-D in his bloodstream. To them, that child is merely a data point, a victim of legalized poisoning.

All manner of medical evidence suggests that pesticides constitute a threat to human health. We need our state government to build the political will to prevent this harm.

Mothers, for eons, have told their children, "I don't care if everyone else is doing it; it is still wrong. Never forget: Our family takes the path of ethical behavior."

Our state agencies should listen to their mothers.

Lisa Arkin of Eugene is executive director of Beyond Toxics, formerly known at the Oregon Toxics Alliance.

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1. [1. Outsider](#)

12/22/2011 02:53AM

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In days gone by, primitive peoples gave great weight to superstitions involving black cats, broken mirrors, stepping on cracks in sidewalks, etc. It is an aspect of human nature to fear consequences from things not understood or imagined to be causally connected. Science attempts to intervene and constructively resolve the fear associated with superstition. Scientists have studied herbicide exposure and determined the exposure levels that can be causally related to harm. When the government says don't worry about your exposure, they are saying that there is no scientific evidence that suggests that the exposure received will cause harm. Of course, the government cannot PROVE that no harm will occur - only that tests have revealed none in controlled studies.

Science cannot prove that stepping on a crack will not break mother's back. It has found no correlation or imaginable causal relationship between crack stepping and mother's backs breaking, but that does not mean that it is truly safe for mother when you step on those cracks. You never know what scientists have missed.

Today, we still have our superstitions and boogeymen. Those afflicted with them tend to congregate in organizations like Beyond Toxics. Irrational fear and the desire to live forever seem to dominate much of American life these days.

2. [2. Sam Young](#)

12/22/2011 04:07AM

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This comment has been blocked.

3. [3. repacked container of the same bunk](#)

12/22/2011 08:32AM

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Day Owen and Co must think somebody will actually pay attention to the shrieks if they come from somebody else...including changing their name to try to dump their baggage.

The opening line says it all: "What if our government knew that a threat to human safety existed in Lane County? Would we expect it to take action to protect us?"

YOU are a threat to human safety. It is precisely because of folks like YOU that we cannot harvest timber, generate electricity, or enjoy a modicum of business success in Oregon.

You file your frivolous lawsuits, invade private property, chain yourselves together, and destroy equipment belonging to others because you think your self-righteous "ME...ME...ME" resonates.

The final insult to everyone is "Mothers, for eons, have told their children, "I don't care if everyone else is doing it; it is still wrong. Never forget: Our family takes the path of ethical behavior.""

How dare you attribute your values to others? My mother AND FATHER taught us the difference between right and wrong... and it didn't include your crap about "ethical behavior".

Amazing. Your audacity is simply amazing.

4. [4. Bobbi Lindberg](#)

12/22/2011 09:16AM

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In the Oregon Health Authority's written protocol for the Triangle Lake investigation, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (the federal agency which conducted the urine testing) notes that "Information is not available to assess the health impact of urinary herbicide concentrations." (p. 19). This is consistent with the statement of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Human health effects from 2,4-D at low environmental doses or at biomonitoring levels from low environmental exposures are unknown." http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/data_tables/2,4-DichlorophenoxyaceticAcid_ChemicalInformation.html.

Thus it is perplexing to learn that these same agencies are telling those who have detectable levels of 2,4-D in their urine that they don't need to worry. And these levels in urine despite the timber companies' decision not to use this particular poison during the study period suggest that when 2,4-D is used, exposure levels must be exponentially higher. The testing in the Triangle Lake area by noted exposure expert Dr. Dana Barr, which triggered the state's investigation, clearly showed increases after exposure to 2,4-D in forest sprays.

Only recently have scientists had the ability to measure very low levels of herbicides in human urine. Scientists are still analyzing the data from less sensitive tests, and have recently found an association between 2,4-D exposure and changes in blood fat and blood sugar metabolism: "Perturbation of lipids and glucose metabolism

associated with previous 2,4-D exposure:

a cross-sectional study of NHANES III data,

1988-1994", available at <http://www.ehjournal.net/content/9/1/11>.

But focusing on levels of pesticides that cause health effects misses an important point: these poisons are supposed to be applied in a way that protects adjoining and downstream people and property from their effects. Any level of pesticide in a child's urine indicates that there has been exposure, and supposedly government regulations should prevent that from happening. This is strong evidence that current policies are inadequate to protect rural residents from pesticide exposure.

It will be very interesting to see if government regulators have the political will to acknowledge the evidence that is in front of their faces: current pesticide regulations do not protect us from potentially grievous harm, and must be changed.

5. [5. randolph](#)

12/22/2011 09:46AM

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Nice try tugging at the heart strings with the "poisoned" child and mother story Lisa but the sane and rational people out here aren't buying it. Your commentary is nothing more than biased left wing dribble from an organization that constantly has to justify its existence to its small vocal minority of members. What you failed to tell people is that 95% of the US population will test positive for 2,4-D at a cutoff of 1.08ppm. As this number comes down, you will approach 100% of the US population. This number is well below any potential threat to human health and is simply a measure of presence in the US population. The recent sampling indicated that people in the triangle lake area tested well below this threshold, more like 0.2-0.3ppm which is significantly below any level that might cause health concerns. Of course it wouldn't serve your purpose to tell your story in this context now would it?

You would likely find any number of chemicals in anybody at some level if you tested for it. Odds are you would also test positive for 2,4-D yet you probably never leave the confines of Eugene so how could that be? You also overlooked the fact that 2,4-D has a very short half life in the body so perhaps you should be looking elsewhere for the source of this exposure instead of targeting your favorite industry to pick on. 2,4-D is a key ingredient in many lawn and garden products and is the most widely used herbicide for home and garden use in the country. Maybe the exposure comes from this residential use (or misuse?) but you fail to mention this possibility choosing instead to single out the timber industry (You and Day Owen must be friends?) 2,4-D like a whole suite of other chemicals is now omnipresent in our environment. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, it is simply a by-product of our industrialized, developed and prosperous society. The fact of the matter is that you can find almost anything, anywhere at the current levels of testing capability. Does this mean we are harmed by a chemicals presence? Absolutely not! It simply means it is present and nothing more.

Timber companies do not spray 2,4-D and Atrazine in the fall. These herbicides are typically sprayed in the spring. To say that timber companies purposefully avoided using these herbicides in the fall is a patent lie and you know it. Your tie in between timber company spraying and Agent Orange spraying in Vietnam is an old worn out false argument that is nothing more than an attempt by you to sow fear and doubt among the ignorant out there.

As you know, the federal gov't sets health related standards for exposure for all chemicals used in the US. These are levels where some form of health related exposure may occur. 2,4-D and other chemicals found in society are at levels well below any cause for concern by a factor of 10,000 to 1,000,000+X. Again, it doesn't serve your purpose to discuss exposure results in this context but that is what rational people would do.

For a factual, unbiased, and scientific discussion of 2,4-D go to:

<http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/2,4-DTech.pdf>.

Chemicals are a fact of life in society today. They provide us with everything we take for granted every day, whether it is the food we eat (maybe the exposure came from food residue?), the cars we drive, or the homes we live in. Responsible use of these chemicals according to label directions ensures these chemicals are used in a safe manner with no negative consequences. Your unstated goal of zero presence of any chemical in our bodies is unrealistic and unachievable unless you want us to revert us back to the stone age?

In closing, I suggest that your followers and members should be more concerned about some of the other chemicals that they voluntarily expose themselves to thru inhalation every day and leave those of us who work for a living alone to do our jobs and provide for the american people.

Bill Billichek

6. [6. randolph](#)

12/22/2011 09:54AM

[Report this comment](#)

Hey Bobbi!

I guess now that you are retired from DEQ, Eugene office (probably with a big fat PERS pension) you can now feel free to express your biased anti-herbicide opinion. Must have been tough all those years at DEQ not being able to say how you really felt. Since you have retired you continue to validate suspicions of your liberal left wing bias. How many more of you are left in DEQ??

Bill Billichek

7. [7. Mark](#)

12/22/2011 10:01AM

[Report this comment](#)

Agent Orange is a 50-50 mix of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid. During the Carter administration, 2,4,5-T was banned, but its close cousin 2,4-D remained legal for further dispersal. These two compounds only differ by one extra chlorine atom on the benzene rings that are the basic building block of this compound and both have essentially the same toxic impact on mammals.

During the Bush the First administration, Gordon Durnil, the former chair of the Indiana Republican Party (ie. a friend of Dan Quayle), was appointed to the US - Canada International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes. Durnil looked at the evidence about toxic chemicals in that bioregion, where a quarter of the US chemical industry is concentrated. Women who eat fish from the Great Lakes (the single largest source of fresh water on Earth) have children with more developmental disabilities than women who do not eat them. Durnil concluded the environmental regulatory system had failed and the precautionary principle (not "regulating the impact") should be used. Since there is no way to test for the synergistic impact of all of the synthetic poisons in commerce, treating chemicals as classes of compounds instead of individual chemicals would be more useful. Rather than spend centuries to study each chemical one by one, classes of toxic chemicals should be banned before further harm is done, starting with industrial use of chlorine. Durnil was an honest conservative, which is a highly endangered species in American political habitats.

The chlorine-carbon bond is not naturally found in mammals and is the root of much of what we call toxic waste. A third of industrial chlorine is used for PVC plastic, made by boiling oil byproducts with chlorine gas. About a sixth is used to bleach paper even though annual plants can be used instead of trees to prevent pollution. Chlorinated solvents and biocides each use under a tenth of chlorine. Only about one percent of chlorine is used to treat drinking water -- four times more is used to chlorinate our excrement before it is dumped into rivers. All of these uses have safer alternatives, but switching would be an admission a mistake was made.

If there was rationality in the design and enforcement of the Oregon Forest Practices Act, it would be illegal to clearcut on corporate timberlands and it would be a felony to use a helicopter to spray chlorinated herbicides over communities. Selective forestry makes more board feet in the long run and does not convert forests into tree farms that get overrun with blackberries and Scotch broom. Short term cut and run deforestation is at the root of the decline of Oregon's timber industry and has ruined many other parts of the world, most notably the Mediterranean societies still coping with the consequences of deforestation two millennia ago. The fact that the Oregon Department of so-called Forestry allows clearcutters to violate requirements for stream buffers and leave trees -- even when the clearcut is next to a major highway -- suggests the promise of regulation of toxic sprays is a cruel farce.

Allowing helicopters to spray chlorinated hydrocarbons over Oregon is a crime of random assault, a violation of basic human rights. The fact that both political parties promote this abuse is a reason I am neither a Republican nor a Democrat and I look forward to continued decline of public support for both flavors of corporate controlled politics.

We are constantly being told about "a permissible amount of radiation." Who permitted it? Who has any right to permit it?

-- Dr. Albert Schweitzer, On Nuclear War And Peace

8. [Bobbi Lindberg](#)

12/22/2011 01:10PM

[Report this comment](#)

Hey Bill!

Check your facts! The 95th percentile means 95% of the population has levels that are lower, not equal as you imply. For 2,4-D, the data shows that 50% of the population had either no detectable 2,4-D or levels below the test's limit of detection. So you have it backwards.

And you say: "As you know, the federal gov't sets health related standards for exposure for all chemicals used in the US." That is simply not true, especially for pesticides. The comparison value used for urinary 2,4-D in the Triangle Lake study is explicitly not based on health criteria.

I am retired from DEQ after 18 years as a water quality specialist. Nothing I learned there convinced me that pesticides are safe. I'm proud to have been a member of AFSCME Local 3336, DEQ Employees, and want you and others to know that the employees there are among the smartest, hardest-working and generous people you will ever meet. I'm proud to have been a public employee. I worked very hard for the state for 18 years but I am glad for my current freedom to speak what I believe to be the truth.

My pension is very far from fat. And what does that have to do with 2,4-D? Or the price of tea in china? Your personal attack seeks to divert people from the real issues and is very transparent. And it's as off the mark as the rest of your comment.

9. [Otherwise](#)

12/22/2011 01:30PM

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Hello Bobbi, the thing about government employees is that they do not have to achieve balance. You probably have heard of the absurd concept of "zero tolerance." In life, there is no such thing. Life is a balance of risks and rewards.

The fact is that with Oregon's invasive non-native weed problems forestry is incredibly difficult without herbicides. On the other hand, some people are afraid of them. Should they be used or not? The answer to the question is a matter of balance.

How likely is it that herbicides will significantly impact people? Apparently, cold hard science does not indicate serious problems, but still people worry. How do we balance fears of "poisoning" with the need to produce economical timber? Remember that added cost of fully manual weed control is always passed directly to the consumer, i.e. working class dude who dreams of building a house.

A more rational concern might be whether we should allow 16-year-olds to drive. 16-year-olds have less maturity and control than older drivers and therefore have more accidents - some fatal - yet the practicality of allowing them to drive leads to their licensing. Likely more lives could be "saved" each year by banning 16-year-old driving than by banning herbicides.

Irrational fear is so profound in modern ignorant Americans.

10. [Professional Forester](#)

12/22/2011 01:46PM

[Report this comment](#)

As a professional forester who takes great care and pride in proper management of private forestland in Oregon, I am growing tired of untruths being fabricated and spread by Oregon Toxics Alliance. 2,4-D is a very widely used herbicide in hundreds of home, pasture, and forestland use products. The idea that mean timber companies are the only source of 2,4-D is simply not true. The idea that timber companies conspired to thwart the pesticide exposure investigation is not true. There are situations and times when 2,4-D makes sense. Generally 2,4-D is not used in the fall. OTA is targeting timber management issues because they seem to be easy fodder. The first large pillar to fall in their quest to rid the market of herbicides. In their haste to find that end they are fabricating lies and spreading them whenever possible.

11. [Good Golly](#)

12/22/2011 02:20PM

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I find it disturbing that many posters here think that turning a blind eye to toxic substances is the right approach. There are definitely far left extremists that would have everyone living in communes using horse drawn carriages but not all that oppose these toxins are liberals.

I am not liberal leaning in the least and oppose almost everything that they stand for but in terms of the toxic nature of many things in our food supply that are considered "safe," I feel that there need to be tighter controls. I think that there can be a balanced approach wherein everyone can benefit to one degree or another but first there must be "admission" that a problem exists.

Do some searching and you will find that there are many other health risks (besides pesticides), from the use of plastic containers that hold our food to the resin linings in canned foods (many containing BPA). Until this issue is really brought to full public awareness, we will continue to "create" health problems in young and old alike. It is ironic that the government bemoans the cost of healthcare and wants to make it more affordable yet allow the use of toxic items and practices that create the health problems in the first place. With the continual increase in the number of cancer cases as well as autism and autoimmune diseases (in children and adults), it would behoove all of us to push for safer alternatives to pesticides/containers used now. While your researching, check out the implications of soy consumption and ask yourself if you want to be one of those that "might not" have a bodily problem arise. There was a time when soy (other than eastern soy sauces fermented for months to alleviate the toxic qualities), was not used for food consumption. It was some business brainchild to tout it (the byproduct) as the next best health food and people bought into the hype. Now it is such a huge industry and in almost every product (soy flour, soy oil), that exposing the negatives is a very tough prospect just as with these pesticides. You could say that there are "safer" levels (maybe death doesn't happen at the point of ingestion), but how can any toxin in the body be deemed safe in the long run and not possibly cause permanent damage? Decide for yourselves.

I am no radical and am very conservative leaning and so I have to say that all of you (apparently conservative minded), do not speak for all conservatives. We do all die eventually but I don't want my end days to be filled with the anguish brought on by some ailment that could have been avoided with better precautions.

12. [12. Good Golly](#)

12/22/2011 02:25PM

[Report this comment](#)

While your researching, check out the implications of soy consumption and ask yourself if you want to be one of those that "might not" have a bodily problem arise.

should read:

While you're researching, check out the implications of soy consumption and ask yourself if you want to take the chance as to whether you "might not" have a bodily problem arise.

13. [13. Audrey Mooer](#)

12/22/2011 02:41PM

[Report this comment](#)

I find it hard to fathom that the scathing attacks to this article actually think they add some sort of value to this issue. Denial, denial, denial helps no one. Well except perhaps in the minds of those who see a semblance of logic in continuing to use what are now known environmental and human health hazards. Anyone who doubts this or truly WANTS to find out the dangers posed from the extensive use of pesticides simply has to dare go beyond the usual Newspeak rhetoric. A good idea however would be to set aside some time needed to absorb the magnitude of evidence in reporting, scientific studies, publications and information that is readily available, as to the monumental hazards of continuing to use toxic chemicals in our state. On the 'assumption' of course that one is actually seeking the truth. Consider if you will that after more than 50 years of using billions of pounds of untested toxins, in combinations unfathomed, repeated year after year, that the health effects are NOW manifesting. Is it not common sense that 50 years of cumulative use of poisons would cause SOME problems? Perhaps for our water resources, land, food, air or populous? OR, that what is now being deemed 'common' health issues in our children such as asthma, ADHD, learning disabilities etc, etc, now proven to be connected to toxins, are manifesting in unheard of numbers. As are cancer clusters in exposed areas. Dr. Sandra Steingraber reveals a direct correlation to toxic exposures, and she is but one of many. OR, that some of these toxins are now being passed onto the next generation, from mother to child. The evidence even worse, as it shows they are passed from mother to grandchild. One would think anyone not willing to venture into such studies, or willing to research this evidence could not possibly deny this raises at least a hint of concern. Right? WRONG!!!! All the science in the world is obviously, just based on the 'responses' here, not going to sway those in support of the chemical industry. So much cheaper to use them, you see.

We are dealing with an industry that is allowed to continue selling us their poisons, knowing full well they aren't even tested, for the industry itself has been deemed the one responsible to do the testing. That, in and of itself is insane, and of course they don't bother with testing for they don't have to. Also the average citizen will have difficulty proving their health issues are related to these toxins. This being how the entire system is set up.

In a recent article here the example was made that one cigarette won't cause harm but years of smoking will and NOW has proven to. This NOW applies to toxic chemical exposures. Perhaps one year of exposure seemed OK. Even two or three years of exposures 'seeming' to be OK. But multiple years of multiple exposures of multiple toxins are now manifesting in the health of Oregonians. Health concerns that are NOW being linked by scientific study to toxic exposures. Aside from the fact there have been scientists attempting to wake up an unsuspecting populous for years, their studies have been shoved aside by those one would think would want to at least consider their findings. NOT !!! Yet some scientists have continued to buck a system and industry that now controls and funds some of the very agencies who were once created to actually protect us. Instead protecting those who chose to use these toxins and the very industry that produces them. Yet the new studies keep coming and deniers are not going to be able to stand their ground much longer.

Low and behold there is now an investigation, at least in Lane County, that can no longer hide the evidence. Surely they won't hide the evidence, right? For you see this state has been in denial for years. Even with evidence going back well over 40 years of destroyed farmland, dead animals, still births, miscarriages, and people sick and far too many eventually dying, all related to know chemical exposure. Now across this state children and adults are proving toxic chemicals are doing harm, and the irony is our health care system is simply not equipped to handle what is on the horizon.

Truth has a mysterious way of coming to light, eventually. It's time has come

Toxins kill and are now proving to kill far more than their intended targets. The very REAL dangers of these toxic chemicals are now manifesting from years and years of relentless use. What is really interesting is that Oregon has continued to allow a known dangerous, hazardous toxin Atrazine, long banned in the EU, to coat our food and be sprayed in our forests and neighborhoods year after year and year. Does this not speak volumes as to our states denial? The people however, are now learning what has been denied us, for far too long, the TRUTH.

14. [14. Outsider](#)

12/22/2011 03:35PM

[Report this comment](#)

Wow, number 13 is a great example of irrational fear. You can tell when hysteria drives a commenter rather than rational thought because they refer to herbicides as pesticides. Conceptual error from the get go.

I guess that those who have no scientific background find it easy to conclude that anything that harms one form of life harms all forms of life and therefore they call it a toxin. The biology of different lifeforms is quite different. A chemical that interferes with a life function of a plant may have no significant affect on animals whose biology is so radically different. Water dissolves sugar but it cannot dissolve silicon dioxide (like sand). The ability to dissolve one material does not imply the ability to dissolve all or most materials.

Irrational fear by association and lack of understanding. Turn to science and get studies funded. It is clear that if dangers were high, evidence would be manifest. Any danger that exists from herbicides is so slight that even scientists intent on finding it cannot do so convincingly - under the exposure conditions normally experienced.

15. [15. Ann Kneeland](#)

12/22/2011 04:33PM

[Report this comment](#)

The federal government's explanation of why the detected levels of 2,4 D in Triangle Lake residents' urine included the assertion that 95% of the US population test at the same levels. Rather than feel reassured by this statistic, we all should be extremely alarmed if this is true. The product label of 2,4 D reads "DANGER" indicating a high level of toxicity. It is a possible carcinogen and a suspected endocrine disruptor, among other documented harms in laboratory studies. Why should any person in this country feel safe having a substance like this showered on his/her head and into the surrounding environment.

If you take comfort in believing the government has done its due diligence in testing this and other chemicals on the market, consider that there are over 80,000 chemicals in commerce today, and only 200 have been tested. Are you willing to gamble your health in the name of economic prosperity with this country's history with tobacco, lead, asbestos, and other

similar products? Just this year, the federal government announced that formaldehyde is carcinogenic. How many people have been exposed to unsafe levels of this chemical before our government took the time to figure out the risks associated with its use?

It is also important to remember that, while you may feel assured that exposure at a low level of any single chemical is "safe," consider how many of these 80,000 chemicals we are exposed to on a daily basis. How many are you even aware of? And at what level of exposure do these chemicals collectively become more dangerous to people and our environment?

16. [16. John C.](#)

12/22/2011 05:51PM

[Report this comment](#)

Outsider,

Regarding #14

An herbicide is, indeed, defined as a pesticide. You may look it up, however, from the wiki definition for pesticide (in part), "Pests include insects, plant pathogens, weeds, molluscs, birds, mammals, fish, nematodes (roundworms), and microbes that destroy property, spread disease or are vectors for disease or cause nuisance."

You say, "It is clear that if dangers were high, evidence would be manifest." However evidence of danger is not always manifest with regard to substance whose effects have long latency period (such as cancer), or are mutagenic and teratogenic (adversely affect embryonic development). Sometimes the proper questions have not been asked or the funding has not been available due to the number of new problems and, sometimes, industry resistance, as noted in previous comments.

Regarding #1,

Permitted exposures to chemicals (that is, chemicals for which limits have been set) are not established by scientists alone. Permitted exposures include evaluation of scientific studies, cost/benefit analysis, and public review (including no little political pressure). I think the results may be somewhat objective, but not necessarily scientific.

I think your invocation of superstition is overwrought. It is your automatic faith in government scientists that is credulous.

17. [17. Precautionary Principle](#)

12/22/2011 06:26PM

[Report this comment](#)

Please, all, keep in mind that the chemical companies that make and sell this stuff have plenty of PR dollars to spend paying people to post comments on sites like this. There is no obligation that any post be genuine or truthful. In other words, the chemical companies can pay PR flacks to post blatant lies and misinformation here to defend their products.

The Precautionary Principle says that if there is any doubt, we err on the side of protecting human health. This is as it should be. Companies have a first obligation to do no harm. If they can make a buck without causing any social or health harm, OK. But, the companies that make this stuff can't meet that test. Worse is the situation in other countries, where there is little or no regulation and accountability at all.

We need to press for more accountability here and in other countries, as well.

18. [18. Outsider](#)

12/22/2011 06:41PM

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#17 precautionary principle = zero tolerance = insanity. PR flacks is a personal assault rather than a reasoned response.

#16 I have no confidence in government. On the other hand, like it or not the chemicals under discussion have been used for a very long time. With such a long time for strong effects to emerge, I have some confidence that the "danger" perceived by some is overstated. I definitely believe that reactions to the unknown essentially comprise superstition and that is what we have before us.

19. [19. B. Carfree](#)

12/22/2011 06:55PM

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Several decades ago, when I was working as a research scientist, I developed a few cheap, in vitro assays that showed potential to sort out some of the biological effects of previously untested chemicals. When I had a bit of free time (rare in those days of 80-hour work weeks), I set up a meeting with a company that happened to have inherited a roomful of chemicals that had been developed by Shell Chemical Company. Unfortunately, by the time they could arrange to give me access to the chemicals, my workload ballooned back up and I couldn't make the time to play with them.

The only reason I bring this up is that thousands of these chemicals had already been put to use and been released into the environment without anyone ever looking at their effects on mammalian cells. American industry is allowed to release potentially harmful substances and the burden of proof to remove them falls to woefully underfunded government scientists who know full well that if they find something in use harmful they will likely find their budget cut.

How bad is it? A good friend of mine was an endocrinologist who worked on reproductive hormones. When the EPA finally decided to fund some tests to determine which chemicals we are being exposed to act as xeno-estrogens, they chose a strain of mouse that is one million-fold less sensitive to estrogen than is normal, thus guaranteeing that no chemical would be found to mimic estrogen. Fortunately, an article my friend wrote for Science embarrassed the EPA enough that they changed strains, although not enough to use any of the most sensitive strains or to test any combinations of chemicals. (sigh)

20. [20. John C.](#)

12/22/2011 08:24PM

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Outsider @18,

Now it does not serve your argument to bow to the judgment of government scientists as you did in @1. You rely instead on your interpretation of common sense. Why the change?

21. [21. Werner](#)

12/22/2011 09:07PM

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A lot of vapid politics and infinitesimal science? Reported verifiable 2,4-D exposures from these individuals are less than American average [0.2 - 0.3 ppm], while other 'special' groups (applicators, forestry workers) in other studies have displayed concentrations hundreds to thousands of times higher. More than 100,000,000 Americans in the \square greater than 50th percentile cohort appear to have higher exposures than this group so if there were reason for human health concerns it would be instead for those 100,000,000 Americans. And obviously the applicators who are routinely exposed and accumulate hundreds or thousands of times the 'average' levels should be the group expressing the reputed profound epidemiological effects.

The clear threats to life on Earth, its diversity and its long term survival involves not a perceived diminished level of human fecundity and perfection from "poisoned" children, but rather of too many of a species already irreversibly genetically bottlenecked and commandeering too much of this planet's resources.

22. [22. Really](#)

12/22/2011 10:15PM

[Report this comment](#)

It is amazing to me to have a person with DEQ's drinking water program coming on here and spread fear. She should know everything in life is a risk. You come across toxins in your everyday environment. What you do is try and limit the exposure. But to say that any level of 2,4-D in the individuals within the Triangle lake area is equated to poor regulation is naive. The pesticides used in the area are legal and approved for that use. The pesticides are used by these individuals according the label requirements. Are the pesticides used by your neighbors used according to the label? In my experience few homeowners read the label, nor follow them. I would be far more scared of what my neighbors are using then someone who's livelihood is depended on them doing the job correctly. Pesticides cost money and the more used the more the cost. So these businesses try and use the least amount possible.

We have chemical all around us. Should parents not have their kids brush their teeth, because fluoride is toxic. Should parents not let their kids play with toys, because they might have lead in them? Probably not. You do the best you can and realize if you tested the average person you would find lots and lots of toxic chemicals in your body at very low levels. Don't throw the proverbial spear at the pesticides used by property owners in the Triangle lake area.

Most of these exposure are being equated to property owners who harvest timber. Wow really?!?!?!? How about the exposure of 2,4-D from the fruit and vegetables you eat from Safeway or Albertsons? How about the exposure from your neighbor spraying Crossbow to control blackberries growing rampant in that area. To blame one individual when 2,4-D is used all over the place is not very scientific and fear mongering.

Do you use a car, heat your house, clean your toilet, brush your teeth or paint your house?? All of these activities involve toxic chemicals. From benzene, carbon monoxide to fluoride which in the right doses will kill you. Do you not do all these things? If not then why?

Get your facts straight and quit trying to use fear to sway peoples opinions and exploiting children to further you ideas.

We all see through your efforts.

23. [23. Ann Kneeland](#)

12/22/2011 11:42PM

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#22...Really, Really? The fact that chemicals are all around us is a reason to join Beyond Toxics in the on-going education and reform to reduce the exposure of people and our environment to these poisons.

And yes, for the record, my child does not brush his teeth with fluoride toothpaste, or play with toys with possible lead content. We eat as much organic, non-GMO, and local food as possible. Our lawn and garden are pesticide free. Our cleaning products are low toxic as possible. I asked my neighbor not to use RoundUp where it might drift onto our yard. I make the very best choices I can in all the ways I can to avoid toxic chemicals.

24. [24. reminder](#)

12/23/2011 02:19AM

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Reminder

An important reminder to everyone:

- 1) What was not mentioned in the article is that this first urine sample from the government study of Triangle Lake residents was the base-line sample.
- 2) The next part of the government study happens in the spring spray season: they will sample many of the same people a second time after sprays occur near their homes. They will then compare the base-line sample -- which is what all of you are currently referring to -- with the spring samples. If, for example, someone who tested negative for atrazine in the fall baseline sample (they dont spray atrazine in the fall which is when the baseline sample was taken) tests positive for it in the spring after it is sprayed near their home, and, if that is also found to be true with others, you have pretty good proof that illegal chemical drift has occurred. THAT WAS WHAT HAPPENED IN THE DR BARR STUDY THAT THEN PROMPTED THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT STUDY.
- 3) On the question of whether or not industry tries to dodge the bullet and obfuscate the study: that won't be known until the spring spray season. The government researchers will compare the spring atrazine use of the previous three years with the amount used in spring 2012 and will know whether industry is intentionally not spraying atrazine as they would normally do in the spring.
- 4) Until the second tests are done in the spring, all of you are hollering prematurely, regardless of which side you are on.

25. [25. WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G](#)

12/23/2011 03:22AM

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NORAHG Responds to FALSE ALLEGATIONS Regarding Children and Pest Control Products.

Children Are NOT At Risk

ALLEGATIONS about the IMAGINARY DANGER of pest control products are TOTALLY FALSE, and are UNTRUE MIS-REPRESENTATIONS designed to ALARM AND ENRAGE the public for MONEY AND PROFIT given to Anti-Pesticide Organizations.

What DANGER !!?!?

MYTH — Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION will somehow eliminate a danger to children.

This is WRONG !

Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION imposed under the PRETEXT of protecting children's health is WRONG !

There are NO valid reports of pest control product problems with children.

Anti-Pesticide Activists ALLEGE that children are somehow MORE vulnerable to pest control products.

This is a MYTH !

Anti-Pesticide Activists are DESPICABLE in their use of CHILDREN as WEAPONS OF COERCION and ULTIMATE TERROR in order to promote Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION.

Non-Expert Anti-Pesticide Activists are GREATLY MISTAKEN by ALLEGING that, as a result of the PROHIBITION of pest control products, fewer children will be exposed to some IMAGINARY DANGER.

For more information please go to the following links ...

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/children-are-not-at-risk/>

<http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/u-s-environmental-terrorism/>

WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

NORAHG is the National Organization Responding Against HUJE that seek to harm the Green space industry.

NORAHG is dedicated to reporting the work of RESPECTED and HIGHLY RATED EXPERTS who promote ENVIRONMENTAL REALISM and PESTICIDE TRUTHS.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/>

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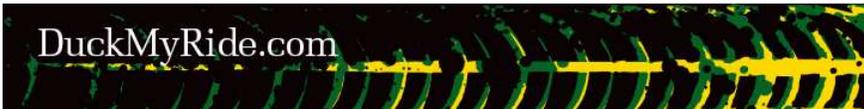
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