



Canadian
Cancer
Society

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND YUKON

Presentation to the Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides

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Outline

- The Canadian Cancer Society
- Pesticides and Cancer
- Why Pesticide Legislation
- Support for Pesticide Legislation
- Our Position



Canadian Cancer Society

- The eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer
- Against all cancers
- Prevention, Support, Research
- Nationally respected; locally connected
- 17,000 volunteers in BC



Cancer Prevention

- About 1/2 preventable
- The ultimate Cure
- The CCS 'sweet spot'



Cosmetic Chemical Pesticides

Definition:

The unnecessary use of chemical pesticides on green spaces to get rid of unwanted weeds and plants

Cosmetic pesticide use includes :

- lawns
- gardens
- non-agricultural landscaping





Cosmetic Chemical Pesticides Cont'd

Does not include:

- Using pesticides to control pests that can affect our health, safety or food supply

Examples:

- Agricultural applications
- Forestry applications

Working Definition of ‘Cosmetic Pesticides’

- Cosmetic use of pesticides can be considered as the use of pesticides for non-essential or aesthetic purposes. For example, a pesticide may be used in an outdoor situation to improve the appearance of lawns, gardens, landscapes or other green spaces and/or to control unwanted or undesirable organisms (**from: BC government 2009 Public Consultation at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/ipmp/regs/cosmetic-pesticides/pdf/consultation-paper.pdf>**)
- We agree!



Pesticides and Cancer: the Evidence

- Over 100 studies have linked pesticide exposure to both adult and childhood cancers
- Cancers include adult and childhood leukemia, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, brain, kidney, prostate and pancreatic cancer
- Children are at greater risk from the effects of pesticides



How Much Evidence?

- “The exact extent of cancer attributable to cosmetic pesticide exposure is unlikely ever to be definitively specified for the following reasons: a randomized, controlled trial ...would be the optimal scientific design to answer this question
- For ethical reasons, such a study will never be conducted” (Letter to Members of the Legislative Assembly, from Carolyn Gotay, CCS Chair in Cancer Primary Prevention)



The Society's Position

The Canadian Cancer Society is calling on the BC government to prohibit the sale and use of cosmetic chemical pesticides on:

- Lawns, gardens and non-agricultural landscaping
- With exemptions to protect public health and safety



Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is Not the Answer

- IPM sounds reasonable, but in practice does not work as its principles are vague and open to interpretation
- IPM cannot be considered an appropriate part of a comprehensive ban to eliminate cosmetic pesticide use, because IPM still uses pesticides
- IPM does not eliminate cosmetic pesticide use, nor does it offer optimal health protection
- Studies show that where IPM programs are in place, pesticide use actually increases



Health Canada is not the (full) Answer

- “acceptable risk” (and “only when used according to label directions”)
- vs. unnecessary risk
- A ‘dose’ calculation (and only active ingredient, not in combination, and no cumulative exposures)
- vs. unnecessary risk
- In general, Health Canada is slow to change and not immune from political influence (tobacco, DDT, lead, radon, asbestos)



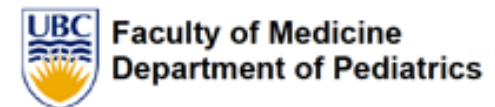
Why?

- Adverse health and environmental impacts
- There are precedents
- BC municipalities cannot ban the 'sale' of cosmetic pesticides or the 'use' of pesticides on provincial or commercial lands
- 39 municipalities have cosmetic pesticide bylaws in BC – all BC children should be protected



Growing Support

- 39 municipalities in BC
- The Union of BC Municipalities' resolutions
- Coalition of 20 provincial health and environmental organizations
- Another 20 regional coalitions
- > 70% of British Columbians
- Province of Ontario, NS and Quebec



Further Public Support

- 5,780 fans of Pesticide Free BC on facebook
- 8,000 responses
- 4,000 petition signatures
- 5,900 letters to the Minister of Environment



Legislation is Good for Business

- Viable alternatives to pesticides exist
- Businesses are shifting to & selling more non-toxic alternatives
- Home Depot, Rona and Loblaw have phased out the sale of cosmetic pesticides



Pesticide Bans Work

- Quebec vs. BC use
- Toronto and Halifax reductions
- If complemented by a strong education campaign
- “The grass is still growing in Hudson”
- “In 10 years we will wonder what all the fuss was about”



What will the Industry say?

- Just what the tobacco industry said in the 1960's and beyond
 - “junk science”
 - “will ruin business”
 - “tested for safety by Health Canada”
 - “nanny state”



In Conclusion; Why Act?

- Healthy Public Policy
- Popular support
- Provincial leadership
- Changing norms



