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A Not-So-Knowledgeable Reader Suggests I Spray 2,4-D On My Breakfast Eggs

by Art Drysdale

by **Art Drysdale**

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Art Drysdale, a life-long resident of Toronto and a horticulturist well known all across Canada, is now a resident of Parksville, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, just north of Nanaimo. He has reno-vated an old home and has a new garden there. His radio gardening vignettes are heard in south-western Ontario over radio station Easy 101 FM out of Tillsonburg at 2 PM weekdays.

Art also has his own website at <http://www.artdrysdale.com>



June 16, 2013



Well what do you know, she's at it again! Who is she, you might well ask and that would be a good question. In fact she is a nobody who claims (falsely) to be an "insider" who is very knowledgeable on pesticides. In fact her well-promoted PhD is in Eastern European languages—nothing at all to do with pesticides or agriculture or horticulture.

Here is K. Jean Cottam's latest dirge referring to my article here of May 12 this year.

"Re your article 'What To Plant in Beds On A Large Property & Comments About The Damn Dandelions', I gather that you are still a great champion of Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA).

"The PMRA has no labs of its own and merely examines toxicological studies provided by the industry, of which inconvenient ones are routinely withheld. The PMRA is notoriously weak in examining epidemiological studies. This is an insider's evaluation of the PMRA.

"You tell us you prefer 2,4-D to table salt, as the former is supposedly safer. Under the circumstances I am very anxious to know whether you spray 2,4-D on your breakfast eggs."

Not to leave Ms Cottam hanging too long for fear she might expire, I should tell her that basically I do not eat eggs for breakfast (or other meals) on the advice of my doctor [who does use cosmetic pesticides]. Although, if I did eat eggs, I might easily be convinced to pour some 2,4-D on them. Many of my readers here will know of my factual stories about the late Dr. R. Milton Carleton, a co-inventor of 2,4-D, who used to have a short drink of pure 2,4-D before his glass of wine each year when I met with him in Chicago while I would be there to judge at the Chicago Flower Show.

To respond directly to Ms Cottam's usual diatribe against hard-working scientists, here is one expert's comment.



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Above: four more new annuals for next year: Begonia benariensis 'Surefire Red'; Superbena Violet Ice; Sundaze Blaze Bracteantha; and Variegated Red Fountain Grass (Penisetum setaceum 'Rubrum'. Below, an additional new herbaceous perennial Lavandula angustifolia 'Sweet Romance' and another new Lilac, Bloomerang Dark Purple. Photos courtesy Proven Winners.



"COTTAM IS WRONG! There is no need for Health Canada laboratories. Cottam ghost-writers express mock-dismay about the fact that Health Canada does not have its own laboratories. Clearly, this is an attempt to invalidate this federal government agency. Just because regulatory agencies like Health Canada do not conduct any studies themselves does not mean that they are merely "rubber stamping" studies submitted to them by the manufacturing industry.

In Canada, pest control products, or pesticides, are regulated by Health Canada under the pest control products act, and are among the most stringently regulated substances in Canada. In order to ensure the accuracy of assessments of pest control products, Health Canada does not need its own laboratories, and neither does any other regulatory agency in the world. All assessments used for the approval of pest control products must be completed by laboratories sanctioned by Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), and using only GLP practices. Instead, Health Canada follows the internationally-accredited good laboratory practice for assessing the safety of pest control products. Good Laboratory Practices allow Health Canada to be impartial and rigorous.

The accuracy of assessments of pest control products is ensured since Health Canada follows a set of guidelines and principles developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The 30 OECD member countries include Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Japan. The assessments of all pest control products must be conducted under those guidelines which adhere to principles of the internationally-accredited good laboratory practice.

"Ultimately, the cost to manufacturers to get a pest control product assessed for safety and brought to market is about 250 million dollars. Only those pest control products that pose no unacceptable risk to health and environment become Health-Canada-approved and federally-legal. There is no need for Health Canada laboratories."

"Epidemiological studies are so often wrong that they are coming close to being worthless. If a modern 'cosmetic pesticide' actually caused cancer, it is fairly certain that this would be ascertained through the extensive testing procedures required before it is registered for use in Canada.

"If the use of pest control products is lowest in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, then why are the cancer incidence and mortality rates higher in these regions?

"The idea that there is an epidemic of human cancer caused by synthetic industrial chemicals is not supported by either toxicology or epidemiology"

Products brought across the border are already being used here, being used for roadside weed control, agricultural production and city/urban gardening. In Ontario, there is NO law that will be enforced against residents using pesticides—enforcement is only applied to the sale and commercial use. In fact, residents don't even have to drive across the border ... they can buy these products over the Internet. Just check out the various suppliers and the prices they offer.

And, keep in mind, it would appear this banning of pesticides may well be a cyclical thing in that many cities and other jurisdictions have already rescinded their bans, or modified them considerably. But do check locally, you may well find the product you are looking for is still available near you!



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