

Regulated, but not safe

BY DON SPADY, MD, EDMONTON JOURNAL FEBRUARY 11, 2012 3:20 AM

Re: "Let's take measured approach to pesticide ban; Council ultimately will have to 'play it safe' and impose restrictions," by David Staples, The Journal, Feb. 8.

I read with interest David Staples's column about pesticides. He is correct in that pesticides are Canada's No. 1 regulated industry. However, that does not make them safe.

They are designed to kill, and, indeed, even Staples calls them poisons.

Although pesticides, used wisely and sparingly, can benefit society, there is clear, although not necessarily unequivocal, evidence that continued exposure to pesticides poses distinct risks to human health.

Equally important, pesticides are not particularly specific and they can affect many non-target animals and plants, making them ill or even killing them.

Pesticides reduce biodiversity: the birds, insects, bacteria, fungi, trees and flowers. Biodiversity is essential to maintaining the health of our ecosystems, the function of which is to maintain all life on Earth, even humans.

Because pesticides can do unwarranted and unnecessary harm and sometimes irreversible harm, it is only ethical to avoid their use whenever possible.

We seem to think that our actions on the natural world have no effect, that the natural world is here for humans to use as they see fit.

Such arrogance is unwarranted.

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