

Response from Syngenta to Big Ag at Your Door  
Delivered via e-mail February 14, 2012

It is unfortunate that you only looked at research data provided by activists and did not take a broader sample of research that provides a more balanced picture. Atrazine is one of the most carefully examined herbicides in the world. Its safety has been clearly established by more than 6,000 scientific studies conducted over the past 50 years.

Many of the studies you referenced in the article, including research by Dr. Paul Winchester, Dr. Tyrone Hayes and Dr. Suzanne Fenton, have been discredited and dismissed by respected scientific experts, including the EPA, Health Canada, and the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

It is disappointing that you chose to ignore the robust database of studies that has shown repeatedly that it is physically impossible for levels of atrazine in the environment to reach concentrations high enough to have any adverse effect on humans.

Given the chemical properties of atrazine and the way it is metabolized in the human body, the levels reportedly found in the urine of residents tested by Dr. Barr could not possibly have come from exposure in the natural environment. We look forward to the results of the tests conducted by the Oregon Department of Environmental Public Health, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the EPA to provide more information.

Other claims in the article, such as suggested links to cancer or birth defects have also been dismissed. An EPA Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) meeting in July 2011 reaffirmed earlier EPA findings that atrazine does not affect reproductive or developmental outcomes, even at levels much higher than would ever be found in the environment. The SAP also reaffirmed that children and developing infants are no more susceptible to atrazine than adults.

In addition, the EPA stated very clearly in its presentation to the July 2011 SAP that the available data do not support any association between atrazine exposure and cancer. This finding is consistent with those of the World Health Organization and government agencies in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. It also supports a 2011 report from the Agricultural Health Study (AHS), an ongoing epidemiological study of more than 89,000 participants sponsored by the EPA, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, which concluded that "there was no consistent evidence of an association between atrazine use and any cancer site."

We hope that future articles will not rely on unproven science and scare tactics. The truth is that atrazine cannot, does not, and will not cause adverse effects at levels to which people would ever be exposed in the real world.

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