

## Commitment Toward Earning the Public's Trust

Manufacturers, governments, health professionals, educators, media, and the general public must take responsibility for understanding pesticide risks to human health and the environment. Fundamental areas of responsibility:

- **Manufacturer:** Continual development of pesticide products that increase benefits while reducing risks; promotion of good stewardship of products in the marketplace.
- **Government (state and federal):** Oversight to ensure minimization of unacceptable risks to the public and the environment while allowing public access to the benefits of modern pest management tools.
- **Medical Community:** Expansion of medical research on the effects of human exposure to pesticides.
- **University:** Enhancement of educational methods for delivering pesticide-related information to concerned parties.
- **Media:** The reporting of factual information on which the public can base informed decisions.
- **General Public:** Increased attention of pesticide users—agricultural, commercial, and homeowners—to safety precautions stated on product labels.

An effective pesticide policy requires public confidence and trust in the business, scientific, and regulatory communities. This can be gained only through an open, balanced, and accurate communication on pesticide risks. Research, education, and cooperation are the critical elements of pesticide risk reduction.

## The Cooperative Extension Service A Valuable Resource

The Cooperative Extension Service links people to research. Pesticide educators at the land grant universities communicating through public presentations, publications, and personal interaction deliver a balanced discussion on pesticide issues. They provide the resources necessary to aid the general public in understanding pesticide issues.

"When your views on the world and your intellect are being challenged, and you begin to feel uncomfortable because of a contradiction you have detected that is threatening your current model of the world or some aspect of it, pay attention—you are about to learn something."

William Drury. *Audubon*. Fall 1993.



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# PURDUE PESTICIDE PROGRAMS

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service



## PESTICIDES AND THE BALANCING ACT

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## Pesticide Issues Under Public Discussion

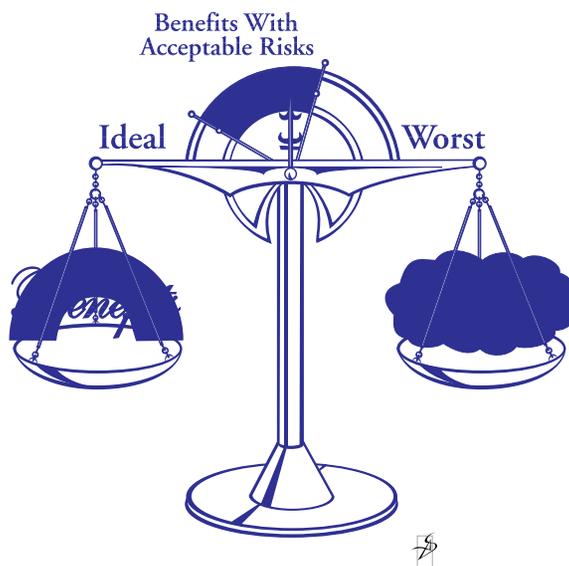
- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Food Safety
- Worker Protection
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Integrated Pest Management
- Wildlife and Biodiversity
- Endangered Species
- Wetlands Protection
- Global Harmonization of Pesticide Registration
- State/Federal Pesticide Regulation
- Public Right-to-Know
- Pesticide Transportation and Storage
- Hazardous Waste Remediation/Disposal
- Biotechnology
- Chemical Trespass/Drift
- Private Property Takings
- Organic Farming
- Right-to-Farm

Pesticide issues are conflictual because arguments are presented in a polarized manner. Meaningful discussions require a willingness to evaluate both the benefits and risks. Learning to accommodate both sides of an issue brings enhanced understanding and consensus.

People face a variety of risks every day. Life poses many hazards. Determining the degree of risk associated with a given situation requires research on the part of the individual involved.

## Public Concerns About Pesticide Use

- Birth Defects
- Cancer
- Immune Disorders
- Child Poisonings
- Food Residues
- School Use
- Worker Exposure
- Direct Threats to Wildlife/Plants
- Wildlife Habitat Degradation
- Environmental Bioaccumulation
- Ground Water Contamination
- Surface Water Pollution
- Pest Resistance



## Benefits of Pesticides that Balance Discussion

**ECONOMIC**—Pesticide manufacturers, user industries, and associated businesses impact positively on the balance of trade, provide good-paying jobs, and provide a tax base to support local, state, and federal governments.

**FOOD**—Pesticides help provide an abundant and high quality food supply at a reasonable price; they protect the stored food supply.

**HEALTH**—Pesticides eliminate pests at home, school, and work. They reduce waterborne and insect-transmitted diseases; protect consumers against potentially lethal molds; protect pets against fleas and ticks; facilitate vegetation control on rights-of-way, thereby contributing to safer driving conditions.

**PRODUCTIVITY**—Pesticide use as an element of integrated pest management lessens negative impacts of pests on crop production, thereby contributing to greater yields on reduced farm acreage.

**RECREATIONAL**—Judicial pesticide use enhances green space benefits via well maintained turf and ornamental plantings; controls weeds and algae in recreational waters.

**SOCIETAL**—Pesticides are an integral part of the equation which allows one American farmer/rancher to produce enough food to feed 128 people per year; it takes less than 2% of the American population to produce enough grains, meats, and fibers to feed the nation, freeing the remaining 98% to pursue other vocations.

**WILDLIFE and ENVIRONMENTAL**—Pesticides contribute to higher production on good farmland, allowing the return of marginal acreage to wildlife habitat; protect the diversity and quality of natural habitat by controlling non-native species; improve water quality and aquatic habitat by reducing soil erosion via weed control in conservation tillage programs.