

June 02, 2011 Maple Ridge News

“Pesticide testing is hardly rigorous”

Editor, The News:

Re: Pesticide tools proven safe time after time (Letters, May 27).

“The industry-funded CropLife Canada organization would like us to believe that our federal pesticide regulatory regime fully safeguards our population from the lethal substances (by definition) manufactured by its members.

Little could be further from the truth.

The federal agency involved, the Pesticide Management Regulatory Authority (PMRA), does no independent safety testing. None.

It assesses the manufacturers' test results.

It does no field testing to detect whether chemicals form new compounds in the soil and water.

It also does not even test the non-active ingredients or ask for such results, which when released into the environment, may have their own chemical reactions in the soil and water. These obviously do not constitute a “rigorous scientific review” and accurate “risk assessment,” as presented by the CropLife representative.

That is why the PMRA is now reviewing and recalling many formerly licensed pesticides. In other words, the safety of products licensed by the PMRA in the past cannot be guaranteed for your health, for the health of your children, who are particularly sensitive to synthetic chemicals, and that of your pets.

This much is fact.

Please contact the PMRA to confirm their methods of testing and licensing chemicals in Canada (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla/1-800-267-6315). Then decide for yourself whether “safe and effective” is a description you would use on the synthetic compounds that the manufacturers would like us to buy from them.

Our doctors and cancer agencies are calling for cosmetic pesticide bans.

The District of Maple Ridge controls the use of pesticides for the cosmetic treatment of properties through its Pesticide Control Bylaw 2006 (www.mapleridge.ca).

And in the absence of a federal initiative to reform pesticide testing, the province is contemplating control legislation.

Make your views known to the Minister of Environment (terry.lake.mla@leg.bc.ca).

Advice on pesticide alternatives is available at www.cprmr.org.”

Christian Cowley, Maple Ridge