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The Ribbon

A Newsletter of the Cornell University
Program on Breast Cancer and
Environmental Risk Factors
in New York State
(BCERF)



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New York State's Pesticide Reporting Law 1996-2001

The New York State Legislature unanimously passed, and the Governor enacted, the Pesticide Reporting Law on July 8, 1996 (Chapter 279, Laws of 1996). This Law amended Article 33 of the ECL by adding a new Title 12 to the ECL, Pesticide Sales and Use Database and Recordkeeping. Title 12 of the ECL requires the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to develop a pesticide sales and use computer database in conjunction with Cornell University; collect information regarding certain pesticide applications, sales, importation, manufacturing and compounding; and prepare an annual report summarizing pesticide sales, quantity of pesticides used, category of applicator and region of application. The law says that this information will be utilized to develop the mandated annual report to the Governor, Legislature and the public regarding pesticide sales and use in New York. In addition, the information will be provided to a Health Research Science Board that has been established under the Law (see also box on page 8).

Perspective: The First Two Years of Pesticide Reporting in New York State: Using the Data to Address Risk

Audrey Thier
Pesticide Project Director
Environmental Advocates

Before the 1996 Pesticide Reporting Law required that pesticide application and sales data be collected in New York State, policymakers had been flying blind regarding the basics of pesticide use: what, where, when and how much. With information pieced together from partial, fragmented sources, and no real sense of the big picture, regulations to protect public health and the environment

were, by default, based largely on conjecture. Beginning in 1998, however, when the first of the pesticide reporting data were released, that situation began to change. While the data are not perfect, they have illuminated previously unknown and, in some cases, counterintuitive patterns of pesticide use in the state and in doing so they laid the groundwork for tackling risk in

an effective and informed manner. Among the key revelations from the first two years of the data:

- Urban and suburban downstate counties report greater use than upstate and rural counties, with New York City topping the charts. In 1998, the counties reporting the highest amounts of pesticides overall by gallons and pounds were Kings County (Brooklyn) and Queens County respectively. The downstate area comprising New York City and the adjacent counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester accounted for 60% of the gallons and 48% of the pounds reported statewide, while constituting only 4% of the state's geographic area. New York City alone accounted for 36% of the total gallons and 27% of the total pounds of pesticides reported for the state in 1998 (Thier, 2000).
- Overall, non-agricultural pesticide use is significantly greater than agricultural use statewide. Pesticides are conventionally thought of as chiefly an agricultural issue, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 77% of the nation's total pesticide use is agricultural. This pattern does not hold true for New York State overall when examined using a variety of measures, although it does remain the case in certain heavily agricultural regions of the state.
- Even though safer alternatives abound, a substantial percentage of the overall pesticides reported in New York State have serious toxicity risks. For example, nearly a third of the total amount of pesticides reported by gallons in 1998 and 44% reported by pounds are classified by EPA as known or suspected carcinogens. Approximately one quarter belong to the highly neurotoxic chemical families of organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. The top pesticide reported by gallons and the second by pounds in 1998 was chlorpyrifos (found in the products Dursban® and Lorsban®), a broad-spectrum organophosphate insecticide banned by EPA in June 2000 for virtually all non-agricultural uses because of its high toxicity.

By altering fundamental assumptions about pesticide use in the state and providing a concrete basis in which to make judgements, the data have already helped bring long-standing policy reform proposals to fruition – such as the enactment last August of prior notice requirements – and have spurred new reforms, including the adoption of pesticide phase-out policies in eight municipalities across the state. More proposals based on the data's revelations are in the pipeline. For example, legislation

to address the particular problem of urban pesticide use was introduced in the New York State Assembly in the immediate wake of the first year of data.

In addition to broad trends, the data highlight variation across the state that point out areas of high exposure or high water contamination risk – patterns that call out for attention by state and local authorities. To date, however, the data have been underutilized for these more specific purposes. While they have been tapped by New York State Departments of Health (DOH) and Environmental Conservation (DEC) offices working on water monitoring and contamination issues, and by DEC for select inquiries related to specific regulatory and enforcement issues, there is considerably more to be gleaned. In California, for example, researchers have used that state's pesticide use data to identify patterns linking high pesticide use to cancer (Mills, 1998) and Parkinson's disease (Ritz and Yu, 2000) rates. In Minnesota, researchers have used even sketchier data to show links to birth defects (Garry, et al., 1996). DOH has birth defects and cancer registry databases at its disposal to compare to the pesticide reporting data, or to select portions of it. With two years of data now available and a third pending, DOH and DEC should make greater use of this data source for epidemiological and regulatory purposes.

It is also important to recognize that, as essential as the pesticide reporting data are for identifying broad trends and risk patterns in need of closer scrutiny, they could be made even more useful and accessible to the public with some key modifications. Specifically:

- The data should be expressed in active ingredients as well as by individual products, and by a single measure – pounds – instead of by both gallons and pounds. These changes would generate a more accurate understanding of the truly dominant pesticides and their health effects. DEC has the ability to make these changes using information it currently possesses, and it has indicated a willingness to do so.
- Farmers should report direct use of all pesticide products, as commercial applicators are required to do, instead of only having sellers report on their sales to farmers, and farmers should be required to keep the same detailed information on all pesticide use that commercial applicators do (right now, farmers keep sketchier information on restricted use products only). Although sales to farmers are a workable surrogate for actual use by farmers, it is far from ideal. Actual use reporting would give agricultural and integrated

pest management researchers real, site-specific data to work with.

- Farmers and commercial applicators should report all the data points now kept on-site to the DEC, not just a select few. Under current statutory requirements, commercial applicators keep certain information, crucial to understanding why pesticides are being used, on-site. These data points include dosage rates, methods of application, and target organism. DEC and DOH have access to this on-site information, but a site visit is required to obtain it.
- All data, not just summaries, should be available to the public.
- Aggregate statewide sales of all pesticides should be reported. Without overall sales data, there is no way to estimate the volume of homeowner use in order to generate a full picture of pesticide use and exposure in the state.

And finally, legislation that would require the data to be electronically reported must be enacted. Such a change would improve data quality by reducing data entry error and immediately detecting recording errors such as incorrect EPA registration numbers, order of magnitude errors in recorded amounts, and unit confusion (liquid versus solid). Electronic reporting would also significantly reduce program expense by eliminating the current elaborate data entry system, and it could be made accessible to all applicators (even those who do not own

their own computers) if a web-based system was used. Such a system could be accessed at any public library.

We have just begun to tap into the wealth of information offered by the pesticide reporting data, but if they are to continue to be useful in future years, beyond revealing the broadest of patterns, they must be fine-tuned in the ways described above. If these changes are made, we will have an ever-improving, ever-useful resource on which to base future action. If not, we will have missed a key opportunity to maximize the effectiveness of our pesticide policy choices.

Environmental Advocates can be found on the web at <http://www.eany.org/>

References

All summaries for the data are based on analysis in Thier, A. "The Toxic Treadmill: Pesticide Use and Sales in New York State 1997-1998." Environmental Advocates and the New York Public Interest Research Group Fund. Albany, NY, 2000.

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Perspective: A View From The Green Industry

Gregory B. Frank

President, New York State Nursery/Landscape Association (NYSNLA)

Thank you for asking me to comment on the Pesticide Reporting Law. I believe that the information gathered may be of importance to the breast cancer fight, but have not yet received any statistics since we started reporting.

The information will not be effective in the way the legislature hopes, due to homeowner use — homeowners apply pesticides on their own properties and we can only hope they do it correctly. The market is regulated on

purchases made through retail stores, but does not monitor how pesticides are applied. A study from Purdue University indicates homeowners do not seek advice when identifying pests, thereby increasing the likelihood of improper applications.*

The actual creating of the report has also been a challenge. We have created a computer program, rather than handwriting the forms the DEC provides. I will

*Home Vegetable Garden Insecticide Use in Indiana, Research Bulletin 970, 1982, Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station, West Lafayette, Indiana. (***NOTE: this publication is now out of print.***)

say that the DEC Reporting Section has been most helpful and responsive when we call with questions. The one area of the report with which I do not agree, and which breeds industry frustration and cynicism, is the “quantity used” section. The report asks for active ingredient on the Annual Use Report, but total mixed quantity used for the Daily Records (this is information that, by law, must be kept on file per day). I believe total mixed quantity should be sufficient on the Annual Use Report, because we are trained and certified professionals who mix the products per label specifications. Therefore, I could easily download what I need from our already computerized product information, create one report for two purposes and leave the conversion up to the DEC, if they truly feel it is necessary. Industry views this as a major paperwork hurdle that seems to serve no purpose other than to increase costs of compliance. Because there is a less expensive, but equally effective reporting method — total mixed quantity — this hurdle will lead to avoidance of the law by unscrupulous individuals, which hurts our industry as well as these efforts.

These same frustrations apply to the current debate over Pesticide Neighbor Notification. New York State’s 48-hour notification law may have just the opposite effect of that intended by its proponents. Although its stated purpose is to let people know what pest control materials their neighbors are putting on their plants, reduced use of pesticides is the actual intention. However, the law actually encourages more pesticides usage, and increased opportunities for misapplications by untrained homeowners.

Plant health professionals have worked hard over the last decade to educate the public about the practice known as integrated pest management, or IPM. This is an ongoing process by which all plants on a property are monitored throughout the growing season. A plant health professional makes frequent visits, inspecting plants for signs of insects or diseases. Early detection usually results in less severe treatment. The monitor determines a pest’s threat to the plant’s life and then takes appropriate action. This can range from doing nothing at all to treating with beneficial insects or an organic material like horticultural oil or insecticidal soap. Chemical application is the treatment of last resort. The 48-hour notification law eliminates the plant health professional’s ability to make on-site treatment choices. S/he either has to apply the material stated in the notification, or apply nothing. Consequently, notification has to contain the worst case scenario, effectively

prohibiting the practitioner from taking less severe measures. This will result in increased pesticide usage.

Ever scarier to me is the fact that many property owners will balk at the higher fees professionals will be forced to charge to cover the added cost of notification. Those of us who have been in the business for a few years have been called in after a homeowner applied the wrong material because s/he made an incorrect diagnosis. There’s also an attitude among many homeowners that, if the dosage on the label is effective, twice that dosage will be twice as effective. This is not the case. This potentially rampant misuse of pesticides by property owners will be totally uncontrolled. Notification will not apply. There is a provision in the law requiring retailers to give out posting signs, but there is no effective way to enforce their use.

If Cornell and other organizations really want to reduce the use of pesticides, they should join green industry professionals in educating the public about proper horticultural practices. Insects and diseases attack weak, stressed plants. Keeping plants healthy is the most effective pest control measure we have. Property owners can do a number of things to keep their plants healthy, including:

- 1) Planting the right plant in the right place. Plants have certain physical and environmental requirements, such as sunlight, water, and certain types of soil. When conditions are wrong for a specific plant, it can decline and pests will be attracted to it.
- 2) Select only quality plants from a quality nursery. Plants should be hardy in our climate and should be from growing nurseries that have similar weather conditions to ours.
- 3) Be sure plants have the nutrients they need. If essential nutrients are missing from the soil, they can be replaced by fertilization. Plants without the nutrients they need to make food become stressed, opening them up to pest attack.
- 4) Practice IPM. (Notification law flies in the face of IPM.)
- 5) Create a notification registry for those people who want to be pre-notified.

The NYSNLA can be accessed on the web at <http://www.nysnla.org/>

The Role of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in the Implementation of the Pesticide Reporting Law

*Robert Haggerty, Chief
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Bureau of Pesticide Management
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation*

The role of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in the implementation of the Pesticide Reporting Law has been to educate and facilitate the collection of data from the regulated community, work in conjunction with Cornell University staff to develop and implement a Pesticide Sales and Use Database, provide data to qualified health researchers, conduct water quality monitoring, and produce an annual report containing summaries of the collected data for use by the Governor, Legislature and the public.

History and Basic Functions

The DEC is starting its fifth year of collecting data required to be submitted on the commercial sales and use of pesticides in New York State. At the program's inception in 1996, however, things were much different. The originating legislation allowed for only a six-month period from the time that it was signed into law until applicators and sellers of pesticides had to start keeping data for reporting to the DEC. Much had to be accomplished in those early days in a very short time frame and much of the groundwork that now supports this program had to be initiated. Meetings were held with the regulated community in order to develop paper reporting forms that were easy to use and yet captured all of the data required by the law. These report forms had to be disseminated to the 16,000 applicators that needed them prior to the start of 1997 when the law took effect. A very intensive educational campaign was initiated to inform the regulated community of their responsibilities. This educational campaign continues even today, as refinements are made to the reporting process and as regulatory requirements evolve.

Annually, the DEC, in conjunction with Cornell University, presents a summary of pesticide sales, the quantity of pesticides used, the category of applicator and region of application. In addition, an overview of the water quality monitoring program established by ECL §33-0714 is provided to examine the potential effect of pesticide use on ground and surface waters in

New York State. It is not the Department's role to draw any correlation between pesticide use and health impacts. This critical activity is the prerogative of independent health researchers who elect to use the database.

Education and Outreach

The DEC's pesticide reporting program performs a range of functions such as outreach to industry, environmental interest groups and cancer advocacy groups; interpretation and clarification of statutory and regulatory requirements; and development and execution of procedures for reporting and managing data. We place primary emphasis on the continued education of the regulated community in order to facilitate the submission of the most accurate data available. We annually conduct a series of technical workshops across the State designed to instruct the 20,000 pesticide applicators and technicians on how to properly report their pesticide applications. Thousands of applicators and technicians attend these workshops, as well as representatives from pesticide businesses and agencies. The DEC also participates in numerous events that take place in every corner of NYS, to provide information to pesticide user groups and associations, breast cancer advocacy groups, environmental advocacy groups, the public and others. Some of these events include Empire State Farm Days, the New York State Fair, New York State Flower Show as well as many local events, seminars and meetings. These events reach thousands of interested parties each year. We also mass-mail information and forms to thousands of regulated entities impacted by the Pesticide Reporting Law.

In addition, the DEC continues its communication links with regulated entities through an e-mail address (prl@gw.dec.state.ny.us) and a toll-free telephone number where thousands of calls are received each year. Customers can have questions answered, receive forms or conduct other business associated with the pesticide program. We also operate a website (<http://www.dec.state.ny.us>), on which there are Pesticide

Reporting webpages located. These webpages provide access to the law, guidance materials, report forms that can be downloaded and printed, and the annual report data on pesticide sales and use in NYS.

Refining the Reporting and Report Management Process

The DEC continues to refine the process for reporting and the system for managing reports received. There is a quality control program where staff evaluate incoming reports to ensure basic criteria are being met. The criteria were established to maximize the volume of data that would be transferable into Cornell's master database. If a report does not meet these criteria, staff seek to correct the report, if possible, through telephone discussion or by mail with the person filing the report. This approach minimizes the number of rejected reports. The goal is to maximize the quantity and quality of data available

to health researchers and other users of the data. Through a contract with a computer consultant, the DEC has established a website to enable regulated entities to report on line electronically. This effort has simplified the reporting process for pesticide applicators and businesses by avoiding the printing and mailing of thousands of pages of data. This feature also spares the DEC the expense of having to pay a contractor to reenter all of the data back into a database. More importantly, not having to handle all of those paper reports and not having to reenter the data, eliminates steps in the process where errors could be introduced into the data or reports could be lost. Therefore allowing electronic submission not only benefits the regulated community and the DEC, but also results in better data for health researchers. We will continue to strongly encourage electronic reporting into the future.

The Role of Cornell University in the Development of a New York State Pesticide Sales and Use Reporting (PSUR) Database

William Smith

Senior Extension Associate

Pesticide Management Education Program

There are several key areas where data generated from pesticide use reporting can be beneficial. Given the appropriate information, a pesticide use database can generate data relative to risk assessment, applicator/worker health and safety issues, possible impact(s) on endangered species, environmental issues including ground and surface water impacts and pest management practices. The data will also serve to educate interested parties as to the types, quantities, and locations of pesticides used in New York State.

The Pesticide Use and Sales Database is being developed by the Pesticide Reporting Section of the NYSDEC and the Pesticide Management Education Program (PMEP) within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University (Cornell). Pesticide use information reported from commercial pesticide applicators, sellers of restricted and general use pesticides, and manufacturers, importers and compounders of restricted use pesticides that operate in the State is being processed and stored in the database for summarization and access. The regulated community is reporting their use and sales at least once per year, but no later than February 1 of the following year (for the previous year's use and sales).

Early Challenges

Given that the legislation contained specifically mandated reporting dates, there was virtually no opportunity to do an extensive analysis or assessment for evaluating the different methodologies that existed for producing such a large database. Two visits were made to California to meet with the Department of Pesticide Regulation staff and to review their pesticide use reporting system; a similar trip was made to Vermont. Below are some of the challenges that NYSDEC and PMEP had to overcome once the legislation was passed:

- Development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with specific objectives and budget for creating a PSUR database.
- Hiring qualified people with the technical background and providing training in the absence of expertise.
- Reviewing and understanding the legislation as to what information was required to be processed.
- Developing reporting forms for the regulated community, including the evaluation of scannable (OCR) forms.

- Deciding which software/hardware and which operating system(s) to use.
- Developing file specifications for the data entry vendor to use when sending key-punched data to Cornell.
- Migrating data from other NYSDEC satellite databases (certification, business registration, commercial permits, and product registration) that needed to be interfaced with the new PSUR information.

Primary Objectives of the Cornell MOA with NYSDEC

Objectives of the MOA can vary from year to year, depending upon priorities and specific requests by the Department. The current objectives that are in the Cornell/NYSDEC MOA are

- Work closely with the NYSDEC on the design and implementation of a database for pesticide use information submitted on reporting forms. This system will utilize a data entry firm or other consultants contracted by the NYSDEC.
- Work closely with the NYSDEC on the design and implementation of a database for pesticide use information submitted on disk, CD ROM, or electronically. Develop data entry and electronic file specifications to facilitate the transmission of electronic information.
- Provide technical expertise to the NYSDEC and act in an advisory capacity relating to the development and implementation of the database.
- The database is dependent on related pesticide information from other NYSDEC satellite computer systems. Cornell will work closely with the NYSDEC in designing/redesigning, developing and implementing these satellite databases (business registration, certification, commercial permits, product registration/ labels imaging, etc.) as a function of the PSUR database.
- A website link <http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/psur/> for accessibility to the pesticide application/sales summaries per the statute is available. Cornell is implementing an interactive mechanism for querying/displaying pesticide use information for those needing access to the data.
- Provide/assist NYSDEC with data reports and other information in response to requests from the Health

Research Science Board, NYSDEC internal personnel, the NYSDOH, the NYS Legislature, other NYS agencies, the public and other parties.

- Provide assistance/input to the NYSDEC on the preparation of the Pesticide Annual Report, which is due to the Governor and Legislature by July 1 of each year.

PSUR Database Architecture and Production Process

There are five distinct architectures for the different applications that are being used to support and carry out the extensive amount of data storage and diverse tasks required. The team also utilizes numerous desktop, client/server, and web-based applications.

Currently, there are six phases that compose the PSUR production cycle:

- 1) Media Administration
- 2) File Verification
- 3) Audit Check
- 4) Data Validation
- 5) Report Generation
- 6) Web-based Report Preparation

The two phases of report generation are most likely of primary interest to the reader. There are twelve reports prepared, eight of which are mandated by the legislation:

- Total Pesticide Applications by EPA Registration Number for county, zip code, and entire state. (3 reports)
- Total Retail Pesticide Sales by EPA Registration Number for county, zip code, and entire state. (3 reports)
- Total Wholesale Pesticide Sales by EPA Registration Number to commercial applicators for end use (1 report)
- Total Wholesale Pesticide Sales by EPA Registration Number to resellers (1 report)

Four additional Database Statistics reports are published in DEC report narrative:

- Number of different products used statewide and by county
- Top 10 products applied in each county

- Top 10 products applied statewide
- Top 10 products as a percentage of all products applied statewide

The eight legislative reports are prepared for web publication on the PMEP Server.

Project Activities and Accomplishments

Under the present legislation, the database keeps track of the quantities and locations of pesticides applied by commercial applicators. It will also keep track of the quantities and intended application locations of restricted use and agricultural general use pesticides purchased by private applicators and quantities of restricted use pesticides sold by manufacturers in New York State. The preliminary system design of the PSUR database has been specified and developed. Cornell is in a continual process of refining this design in conjunction with the NYSDEC. That includes further system enhancements, reevaluations based on previous reporting years, and maintenance and operations of the system.

System, database, and network administration are ongoing tasks that consume a significant portion of our project time, yet are virtually invisible to the outside world unless something goes wrong. Recent modifications include stringent controls over duplicate files transferred by the data entry vendor and a simplified

approach to storing pesticide applications that were reported for a range of dates.

The PSUR team initiated an investigation of electronic imaging processes and technologies for the Product Registration Section. The section needs their pesticide registration labels imaged prior to the NYSDEC move to a new building. We investigated technologies used by five organizations, met with representatives of some of these companies, and performed research on the Internet. Sample pesticide labels were sent to selected companies in order to test the quality of the images they could produce, as well as their image retrieval software. A vendor to do the imaging was selected in March 2001 and the imaging process has started.

The system development initiative for the Certification Section has business-process charts that provide simple, non-technical views of the Section's activities. We have created a model of the certification process data that the system will have to store and scenarios that describe the interactions of section personnel with the new system. At present, we have developed a list of over 120 outstanding analysis issues that need to be resolved with the Certification staff so that we can develop software that meets their business needs.

Finally, the PSUR web page has been redesigned and allows access to a wealth of additional information. Please find us at <http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/psur/>

Pesticide Reporting Survey Done by the Health Research Science Board

The Health Research Science Board of the New York State Department of Health was authorized by Chapter 279 of the NYS Laws of 1996. One of the Board's duties is to conduct "an evaluation of the basis, efficiency and scientific utility of the information derived from pesticide reporting," and to make recommendations as to "whether such system should be modified or continued." The Board is also instructed to consider "whether private citizen use of residential pesticides should be added to the reporting requirements" (Public Health Law section 2413). To perform this evaluation, the Board solicited information from interested parties. The Board developed a questionnaire requesting written comments on pesticide reporting to provide an opportunity for as many parties as possible to comment. The survey was sent to 302 organizations, including government agencies, environmental groups, breast cancer advocacy groups, professional and trade organizations, and business groups; 24 responses were received. A report on the results of the survey will be included in the Board's biennial report to the Legislature, which will be available shortly.

(A copy of the biennial report can be requested by calling the New York State Department of Health toll-free at 1-800-458-1158)

***Ribbon* Readers, we need some information!**

Please return this brief, postage-paid survey as soon as you can.

We need to know:

1. Who are you? (check all that apply)

- a cancer survivor
- family of a cancer patient
- a friend of a cancer patient
- a cancer activist
- a journalist
- an educator
- a student
- a policymaker
- a CCE educator
- a farmer/farm worker
- a healthcare provider
- a scientist
- a homemaker
- an environmental activist
- a pesticide applicator
- other _____

2. Why do you want the information in *The Ribbon*? (check all that apply)

- to educate myself
- to educate others
- for school assignments
- to give to a relative/friend
- to aid my research
- to share with a colleague
- other _____

3. Do you like the symposium-like format (several related articles on a theme)?

- yes, please maintain this format
- no, I would rather see :

4. Please rate the last several issues of *The Ribbon* in terms of their value for you

(1 = best; 2 = second best, etc.)

- Pesticide Sales & Use Registry
(current issue)
- Premature Thelarche
- STAR Trial/Tamoxifen
- Mouse Mammary Tumor Virus

What are your suggestions for themes?

5. Do you prefer a printed copy, or would you be satisfied to read *The Ribbon* on the BCERF web site?

- prefer print
- would switch to electronic, with an email reminder.
(Currently *The Ribbon* is posted on the web within one month of its print date.)

Other comments for the Editor:

(Optional) Name and preferred means of contact:

THANK YOU! PLEASE FOLD AND TAPE CLOSED (NO STAPLES)

"We Need to Know"

Ad Hoc Discussion Group

"Learning Together"

The Ad Hoc Discussion Group meeting took place in Albany on February 14, 2001, with 30 attendees. This meeting began with a forum which BCERF will now continue in each Ad Hoc meeting; ten-minute blocks provided to participants to discuss their interests, activities or concerns. This meeting's forum presenters were Lorraine Pace of the University Medical Center of Stony Brook and founder of Breast Cancer HELP, Inc., Devra Nusbbaum of the Legislative Women's Caucus, and Em Armawong and Patricia Miskell of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Bob Haggerty of the NYS DEC provided an update on the Pesticide Sales and Use Registry (PSUR). They are currently processing data from 1999, and hope to have this completed by July 1, 2001. Bob described his work as bringing the program into the second phase now, the first four or five years having a very heavy emphasis on the education of the regulated community. He described an increased understanding of the regulated community: it is a fluid community, with about 3000 per year coming and going. Education is ongoing and efforts to improve the quality of the data are always being increased, with the goal of the data being of most possible utility for health researchers. Also, he reminded the group that the Health Research Science Board was set up with the same legislation as PSUR, and that they make recommendations to the legislature on how PSUR can be made better.

Two complementary presentations by BCERF staff followed. Barbour Warren gave a talk entitled, "Childhood to First Child's Birth: A Critical Period for Breast Cancer Risk." Participants were very welcoming of this overview of why this period is so important for subsequent breast cancer risk. He provided background in the cancer biology and the biology of breast development to enable the non-scientist to understand. Suzanne Snedeker followed with an introduction to a very current area of research, premature thelarche (breast development), and a possible environmental connection. This talk coincided with a special edition of *The Ribbon* on the same theme. In addition, Barbour and Suzanne will be providing these presentations again at the Ad Hoc meeting in Buffalo on June 29, for the benefit of

the western New Yorkers with whom we hope to interact then.

The group in Albany also welcomed the opportunity to hear about the cancer mapping activities of the NYS DOH. Betsy Lewis-Michl and Lloyd Wilson were there to discuss these investigations. They covered the five-step process used by DOH to prioritize and investigate "unusual disease patterns," emphasizing the various points for community participation and notification.

LATE NOTICE

Please contact BCERF if you wish to attend

The next Ad Hoc Discussion Group meeting will take place on Friday, June 29, 2001 at the Center for Tomorrow
SUNY Buffalo Amherst Campus

Ad Hoc Discussion Group meetings are open to any and all stakeholders to come together to discuss issues related to breast cancer and environmental risk factors.

The Ribbon is published by the Cornell Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors in New York State. Comments are welcome; contact the Editor

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BCERF Research Project Leader Responds to Claim Concerning Antiperspirants and Breast Cancer Risk

Suzanne M. Snedeker, Ph.D.
BCERF Research Project Leader

Resources on This Topic on the Web

There have been a series of widely circulated emails that claim that use of antiperspirants is the major cause of breast cancer. I have extensively searched the scientific literature. I have not been able to locate scientific studies that support this claim. There are no published studies that have evaluated whether women who use antiperspirants have a higher risk of breast cancer than women who do not use antiperspirants. I have run literature searches on the active ingredients in antiperspirants (including aluminum chlorohydrate), and could not locate any studies that have shown that these ingredients cause breast tumors in animal tests. Also, there is no evidence that not perspiring is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. Using antiperspirants does not affect how the body breaks down toxins. The major organ that detoxifies chemicals is the liver. The major routes of excretion of toxins or their break down products are via the feces and urine. Again, we have not been able to locate any studies that support the claim that antiperspirants increase the risk of breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society's response: http://www3.cancer.org/cancerinfo/load_cont.asp?ct=5&doc=23

They agree that there is no evidence in the epidemiology literature that indicates that antiperspirants increase the risk of breast cancer.

The National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service's fact sheet on Antiperspirants/Deodorants and Breast Cancer Risk: http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/3_66.htm

The scientists at the National Cancer Institute are not aware of studies linking use of these products to causing breast cancer.

The Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's response: <http://www.breastcancerinfo.com/news/html/062499.asp>

This research foundation concludes that to date research has not linked antiperspirant use with a higher risk of breast cancer.

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