

INDUSTRY TASK FORCE II ON 2,4-D RESEARCH DATA

Information Line: 1-800-345-5109
Fax: 252-393-6327

2,4-D Web Page www.24d.org
e-mail: donpage@24d.org

NEWS RELEASE

PESTICIDE USE: TOP QUESTIONS OF CANADIANS ABOUT LAWN CARE - PART II

Swansboro, NC, April 24 – With the arrival of spring, many Canadian homeowners will once again be turning their attention to lawn and garden care. And with spring's onset comes the resurgence of claims and counter claims concerning pesticide use by homeowners and commercial lawn care service companies.

"At this time of year, there is a significant increase in the number of calls from Canadians to the 2,4-D Information Line", observes Donald Page, Executive Director of the Industry Task Force II on 2,4-D Research Data. "There is a large body of confusing information in the public domain which raises concerns about the use of lawn pesticides by homeowners."

With 19 years of involvement in research, the Task Force has an interest in this matter, given that 2,4-D is the most commonly used active ingredient in lawn care herbicides. The Task Force is a group of international companies sanctioned by government to fund more than 270 new research studies required by the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) under the Canadian pesticide re-evaluation program. These studies are now complete and are currently being reviewed by regulatory agencies in Canada and the United States.

Callers to the Information Line most frequently raised questions about the following issues:

1. "Bystanders to turf pesticide applications are exposed to 2,4-D."

Research at the University of Guelph (<http://www.24d.org/harris.pdf>) shows the highest observed exposure to 2,4-D for commercial and homeowner applicators was well below the lifetime acceptable daily intake as established by World Health Organization. The most recent research demonstrates that there were no detectable exposures for the bystanders who resided in homes of homeowner or commercially treated lawns or for barefoot, barelegged bystanders who actively walked on and sat on turf grass one hour after the application.

2. "Regulators do not take into account the effects of pesticides on children"

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and other government agencies tasked with the responsibility of assessing the risks associated with pesticides do take into account the exposure to vulnerable groups, such as children. To quote from the federal government's response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla/english/pdf/hlawns/hl-GovtResp-e.pdf>):

"Assessment of children's potential exposure includes direct and indirect skin contact with surfaces treated with pesticides, ingestion through the transfer of residues from the hands to the mouth, soil ingestion and inhalation. Children's unique play and activity patterns, including higher contact with surfaces and increased teething and mouthing activity, and children's unique physiology, are factored into these exposure estimates. The unique food consumption patterns of infants and children are considered, including their consumption of maternal milk, packaged milk and fruit juice."

3. "Pesticides are inadequately researched."

2,4-D, in addition to being the most widely used agricultural herbicide worldwide, was the first selective herbicide developed (a selective herbicide controls weeds in a crop without harming the crop), something that stimulated an enormous amount of research on 2,4-D all over the world. The toxicology database alone exceeds 4,000 peer-reviewed, published studies, plus hundreds of unpublished studies that the manufacturers must fund for the various regulatory agencies throughout the world. Additionally, there are now more than 100 peer-reviewed, published epidemiologic (human) studies pertinent to 2,4-D.

The Canadian government acknowledged this research in its response to report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development last October.

4. "2,4-D is a known or possible endocrine disruptor."

The endocrine disruptor hypothesis was first popularized in 1996 by Theo Colburn in her book *Our Stolen Future*. 2,4-D was mentioned only once in her book, and not in reference to endocrine disruption. However, 2,4-D is cited on the web sites of major Canadian environmental groups as a known or possible endocrine disruptor.

In July 1998, EPA issued a draft list of 168 candidate chemicals for their endocrine disruption High Throughput Screening (HTPS) demonstration studies. The compounds were placed in various categories: Category 1, compounds suspected of endocrine disruption; Category 2, compounds unknown as to their endocrine potential; and Category 3, compounds known to have no endocrine effects with adequate reproductive, developmental and other studies. 2,4-D was placed in Category 3.

Canadians are understandably concerned about pesticide use in the urban setting. There are many contradictory statements in the public domain about the potential effects of pesticides on human and animal health. However, Canadian homeowners should be assured that their country has one of the most stringent pesticide regulatory systems in the world.

Additional information may be obtained toll-free: 1-800-345-5109, www.24d.org or email: donpage@24d.org.