

March 16, 2016

Public Comments

To: CCC IPM Advisory Committee

From: Susan JunFish, Parents for a Safer Environment

I wish to share with you some of the data that Parents for a Safer Environment has worked up using the pesticide use reports from each of the pest control programs.

I would like to first point out that the Special District program of Public Works is still using rodenticides in the county parks. Last fiscal year the program used the active ingredients diphacinone at .005% added to either grains or solid blocks of rodenticides at Livorna Park, Alamo and Frontage Property on Driftwood Drive at Bay Point. It would be helpful to see the decision making tree on the way rodenticides are chosen instead of traps or asphyxiation methods using safer gases like carbon dioxide. This includes the large usage by our Department of Agriculture who also provides them to municipalities all over the county. This is a critical issue for the community.

Second, I am concerned about the exponential increase of herbicides being applied by the Grounds program in the last fiscal year. Ground program is now using over 685 lbs of pesticide products around public spaces near buildings where people and pets may become exposed. Nearly 600 lbs was RoundUp, now listed as a Probable human carcinogen and Gallery 75 was used at 18 lbs.. Also, over 658 lbs of potential groundwater contaminants were applied last fiscal year by Grounds program alone. Decision making trees for usage of the 11 herbicides appear to need discussion.

Third, we had to calculate the lbs of pesticides used for Right of Ways and could not distinguish the 3 distinct weed control programs for Roadside, Flood Control and Airport/empty lots programs since only a few months were separated. We hope that for Fiscal year 15-16, Public Works would separate all these distinct programs in order to properly tract usage and progress in each program per the county's IPM policy.

The Right of Ways program of Public Works alone used over 10,200 lbs of pesticides last fiscal year, using 20 herbicides.. These pesticides are listed as carcinogens, hormone disruptors, potential groundwater contaminants, state and federal restricted, as well as injunction listed for risking protected and endangered species. These program needs review of why so much pesticides are required and at such high rates.

I would ask that county staff provide the decision making documents that have been drafted for any of these programs as soon as possible to those on this Committee for review weeks prior to the first subcommittee meeting.

Thank you,
Susan JunFish
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Contra Costa County IPM Advisory Committee

Public Comment from Christine Steck of Moraga

Good Morning, my name is Christine Steck and I would like to share with you my experience in attending an IPM meeting of the County of San Francisco last week. The topic was to compare the effectiveness of several weed control alternatives to RoundUp. San Francisco is working to reduce its use after RoundUp was reclassified as a probable human carcinogen by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research of Cancer, or WHO IARC.

The meeting was attended by over 60 people and most of them appeared to be grounds maintenance or managers in the public works or grounds maintenance programs or San Francisco County. I was impressed at the extensive participation of workers in the county and how individuals were encouraged to participate and debate the pros and cons of the alternatives being discussed and also provide their own personal experience with weed control methods to share with one another. I wonder if Contra Costa County may benefit also from such a collaborative process that encourages sharing of experiences. It would be helpful if staff members from the Grounds program who have to deal with weeds these IPM Advisory Committee meetings. It's only every other month and their participation would be helpful. If weed problems are what require most of the pesticide usage by our county, shouldn't we spend more time in addressing this problem? Is there a venue or forum that provides a chance for all the staff who work on weed control to discuss their problems, their successes, and for brainstorming to occur? I hope some progress is made in this area to reduce the nearly 10,000 pounds of herbicides annually being applied to public spaces every year.

San Francisco compared the efficacy of a product called X-Empt containing clove oil and salt against a product called Avenger containing d-limonene. Their conclusion was that they were both effective, there was not a significant difference in the efficacy between the two, however Avenger with d-limonene was much cheaper.

They also compared the efficacy of Tarping, a method to simply cover weedy areas with a dark plastic sheeting to prevent photosynthesis. They showed photos of effective weed control by tarping that takes about 3 months to work. San Francisco uses this method because their temperature is colder. I learned by audience participation that in hotter climates like that of Contra Costa County, we have the ability to use solarization methods that trap heat and kill weeds as

well as seed banks. This can be as short as 4 weeks during the hottest months of our summers.

I was glad to see Ms Drlik at this meeting and would like to hear reports of helpful information gathered from meetings such as these to be shared with this Committee. Can our county also do such studies to find alternatives to toxic pesticides such as RoundUp? We can also learn much from San Francisco's experiments. Why not invite members on our county's IPM Advisory Committee to also attend these public meetings sponsored by the County of San Francisco? I hope in the future, staff would share such helpful opportunities where IPM Advisory Committee members can benefit.

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