

Pesticide Use in California: More of the Same

Pesticides continue to threaten California's ecosystems and farmworkers according to two new reports released by Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR), of which Food First is a member, and Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA).

Pesticides Threaten Birds and Fish

CPR's report, *Disrupting the Balance: Ecological Impacts of Pesticides in California*, calls on the California Environmental Protection Agency and the federal government to ban three pesticides—the organophosphate insecticides diazinon and chlorpyrifos, and the carbamate insecticide carbofuran—because of their devastating impact on birds, fish, and other wildlife.

Over the last 30 years, the agrochemical industry has turned from organochlorines such as DDT toward neurotoxic organophosphate and carbamate pesticides. Use of these toxic nerve poisons continues to grow, with an eighteen percent increase in California between 1991 and 1995. Some seventeen million pounds of organophosphate and carbamate pesticides are applied annually in urban and agricultural settings.

The report's specific findings include:

- Multiple pesticides are often found in California waters and sediments at levels that are lethal to



From *Disrupting the Balance*

Photograph by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

zooplankton, the main food source of young fish.

- Toxic pulses of diazinon and chlorpyrifos occur routinely in California streams and rivers during critical stages in fish development.
- Carbofuran and diazinon are responsible for the majority of bird kills in California.
- Pesticides are used routinely in national wildlife refuges, despite laws mandating that protection of wildlife and the environment take highest priority in these areas.

The report concludes with a brief overview of ecologically-based pest management strategies that represent a long-term, sustainable solution to controlling pests without using toxic chemicals.

California Agencies Not Protecting Farmworkers

Fields of Poison: California Farmworkers and Pesticides, written by Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA), United Farm Workers (UFW), and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF), found inadequate protection of California farmworkers by state and county agencies.

During 1996–1997, more than 85 percent of documented pesticide safety violations statewide carried no fines at all from County Agricultural Commissioners, and were not recorded in permanent statewide records. Of the fines issued between 1991 through 1996, almost half were less than \$151, and less than five per-

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FOOD FIRST empowers citizens to address the root cause of hunger, poverty, and environmental decline. Our research and educational materials reveal how anti-democratic institutions and belief systems promote hunger and environmental destruction.

THE CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

"ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS BUS TOUR," November 12-14, 1999

The Congressional Progressive Caucus is launching an "Economic Human Rights Bus Tour" to focus on national priorities for the 21st century, and violations of human rights due to economic injustices in this country. The tour is co-sponsored by the Economic Human Rights campaign at Food First/IFDP and the Progressive Challenge at the Institute for Policy Studies.

The Progressive Caucus is a 53-member body in the House of Representatives, chaired by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR). The Progressive Challenge, with its Fairness Agenda for America and the Economic Human Rights Campaign, has the support of several hundred public interest groups nationwide.

The bus tour follows President Clinton's July "New Markets Poverty Tour," on which he was joined by corporate CEOs and some members of Congress. On his seven-city tour the President unveiled his "New Markets Initiative," focusing on attracting private sector investment to the "untapped markets" of poor neighborhoods and regions, with federal subsidies (corporate welfare) in the form of tax incentives, loan guarantees, and the strengthening of the Community Reinvestment Act.

We applaud the President for turning his attention to our nation's poor. Thanks to the attendant media coverage it is now more clear than ever that while some members of our population are enjoying the benefits of a booming stock market, many others have been left out and are struggling simply to survive. While the President's "New Markets Initiative" may be a positive step toward jump-starting some of our nation's depressed local economies, by itself this initiative barely scratches the surface of the problem of poverty in America.

One in every five of our children are living in poverty. The number of children living in extreme poverty is on the rise, and millions of Americans are working at more than one job and still not making enough to cover the basic needs of their families. Something is terribly wrong. Bolder initiatives and a stronger federal role are needed to address the severity of the problem.

The "Economic Human Rights Bus Tour" will bring members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to the South to hear testimony from people living under very depressed economic conditions. The tour will focus on the underlying causes of poverty, and introduce Progressive Caucus initiatives focusing on:

- More acceptable levels of funding for education, health care, and child care
- Living wages
- Measures to address the relationships between race and poverty
- Reordering our federal priorities to put meeting the needs of our nation's poor at the top of the agenda

For more information about the Economic Human Rights Bus Tour please contact Food First at: (510) 654-4400 (x108), or by fax: (510) 654-4551, or by e-mail: foodfirst@foodfirst.org

FOOD FIRST 25 YEARS IN REVIEW:

The Early Years

Joseph Collins and Frances (Frankie) Moore Lappé founded the Institute for Food and Development Policy (commonly known as Food First) in 1975. Both Joe and Frankie came of age in the roiling cauldron of the sixties, a time when many young people were immersed in the civil rights movement and demonstrating against the war in Vietnam. President Johnson's 'War on Poverty' brought Frankie to Philadelphia, leading her to question the poverty she saw here in America and around the world. This resulted in writing *Diet for a Small Planet*, published by Ballantine Books in 1971. The book struck a strong chord with readers and sold two million copies over its first ten years.

At the same time, Collins was working at the Washington think tank, the Institute for Policy Studies, on the book *Global Reach*, about the impact of multinational corporations on the Third World. He also co-authored a report titled *World Hunger: Causes and Remedies*, which was



Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins at work in the '70s.

written to challenge the official UN world food assessment for the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome.

Joe and Frankie first met during a conference at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. At the time Joe was deep into the research for an as-yet-untitled work on hunger. Frankie offered to send any relevant information that came her way. A couple of weeks later,

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cent exceeded \$1,000. California counties with the largest number of reported pesticide poisonings and the highest agricultural pesticide use issued the fewest fines for pesticide safety violations.

Approximately 600,000 farmworkers are employed in California, the state with the largest agricultural economy in the United States. Between 1991 and 1996, an average of 665 incidents of acute farmworker pesticide poisonings were officially reported in the state each year, with many more cases unreported.

Food First joins PANNA, UFW, and CRLAF in demanding immediate action to reduce pesticide exposure and to strengthen enforcement of

regulations to protect farmworkers, including:

- Stronger enforcement of existing pesticide safety laws, including mandatory minimum penalties for violations.
- A rapid phase out of the most toxic pesticides and promotion of safe and sustainable alternatives.
- Improved reporting systems for pesticide-related illnesses and pesticide use.
- Improved farmworker access to medical treatment.

Agriculture is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States. The death rate among agricultural workers nationwide was estimated at 20.9 per 100,000 workers in 1996, compared to the average for all industries of 3.9 per 100,000

workers. Rates of injury or illness among farmworkers are also high. Since 1990 injury rates in agricultural production have ranged from 9.4 percent to more than 12 percent, well above the average of occupational injuries for all industries.

"Many consumers are choosing cruelty-free cosmetics and recycled paper. We should also be demanding food that is produced in an ethical and socially responsible way and not at the expense of the health and well-being of thousands of farmworker men, women, and children," said Margaret Reeves of PANNA.

Both of these reports are available from Californians for Pesticide Reform, 49 Powell Street, Suite 530, San Francisco, CA 94102, (888) 277-4880/(415) 981-3939, web site: www.igc.org/cpr

Frankie called Joe in Washington and asked about joining forces on what both considered important work.

Shortly afterwards, Joe moved to Hastings-on-Hudson, New York where Frankie, her husband Marc and children Anthony and Anna were living. Here the Institute for Food and Development Policy (fondly known as IFDP) was founded in 1975. The first order of business was the book, *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*. Frankie and Joe surrounded themselves with typewriters, piles of books, and hundreds of file cards, to construct a comprehensive analysis of the myths that perpetuate poverty.

Food First was published in 1977, also by Ballantine Books. This and other early books such as *Aid as Obstacle*, influenced

many organizations, convincing them to shift their emphasis away from direct food aid toward empowerment of people. We owe a debt of gratitude to Frankie's brother, John Moore, Jr. for the phrase "Food First," which has since become the common name for the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

In January 1977, the Institute moved to San Francisco. David Kinley, formerly with the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) and the Corporate Data Exchange had joined the staff in New York and made the move to the West Coast with Frankie and Joe. By 1979, the Institute had expanded to ten full time and six part time staff members, and 25 interns.

Food First's Publications—The First Five Years

These early publications established Food First's worldwide reputation for independent, well-documented, accessible research.

1977

Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity
Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins with Cary Fowler

World Hunger: 10 Myths
Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins

1979

Needless Hunger: Voices from a Bangladesh Village
Betsy Hartmann and James Boyce

Agrarian Reform and Counter Reform in Chile
Joseph Collins

Mozambique and Tanzania: Asking the Right Questions
Frances Moore Lappé and Adele Beccar Varela

1980

Aid as Obstacle: Twenty Questions about our Foreign Aid and the Hungry
Frances Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins and David Kinley

Seeds of the Earth: A Public or Private Resource?
Pat Roy Mooney

Casting New Molds: First Steps toward Worker Control in a Mozambique Steel Factory
A conversation with Peter Sketchley and Frances Moore Lappé

What Can We Do? Food and Hunger: How You Can Make a Difference
William Valentine and Frances Moore Lappé

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