

Subject: RE: Pesticides - 2, 4-D and Roundup (glyphosate)

From: "Bill Tracey" <wrtracey@telus.net>

Date: Sat, 16 Jun 2007 18:54:52 -0700

To: "Brian Platts" <bplatts@shaw.ca>, <council@dnv.org>

CC: "Monica Craver" <mecraver@shaw.ca>, "Corrie Kost" <kost@triumf.ca>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "John Hunter" <hunterjohn@telus.net>

Hello Brian,

Well said – I couldn't agree more!

As an engineer I am constantly having to deal with people who are afraid (unnecessarily) of things that are perfectly safe, useful and convenient if treated with respect and used properly (i.e., in moderation). Sunlight is good for us in small doses – dangerous, even lethal, when one is over-exposed. We all drink water, and it's healthy – but one can die from drinking too much water, and we all know about drowning.

Why have we humans become so afraid of so many things over the past century? That, in itself, is not healthy – recent studies have shown that people who worry a lot are most likely to suffer from dementia as they age. (Which raises the question of which is the cause and which the effect?) I'm inclined to think our fear is a form of mass hysteria, fed by the media. Council needs to do some thinking for itself, including proper literature research, and get some properly qualified (not just staff) scientific advice – take leadership, instead of following the mass. Note that I say "qualified" -- it's not the number of scientists making claims, it's their qualifications that count. "West Vancouver has done it" doesn't mean it's right – they can make mistakes with the best of us. And zoologists are not automatically qualified to pronounce on chemistry or physics, or medicine for that matter, no matter how famous they may be.

Moderation, not prohibition, usually is the answer; which translates into using common sense by heeding the advice of the majority of scientists qualified in the relevant science.

Keep up the good work,
Bill Tracey

From: Brian Platts [mailto:bplatts@shaw.ca]

Sent: June 16, 2007 4:24 PM

To: council@dnv.org

Cc: Monica Craver; Corrie Kost; fonvca@fonvca.org; John Hunter; Bill Tracey DNV

Subject: Re: Pesticides - 2, 4-D and Roundup (glyphosate)

Mayor & Council:

With respect to pesticides, some people suggest that you should ignore science and rely on common sense. I would argue that common sense is perfectly in-line with what the scientific experts have deemed to be safe and of no health threat. The alternative to the science on this issue is to resort to making regulatory decisions based on unfounded fears and individual phobias.

Beyond the campaign to ban harmless pesticides, there are people convinced -- without any scientific basis -- that cell phones, overhead powerlines and electrical appliances are making them sick. Even personal fragrances are being targeted for bans. It never ends. When it concerns toxicity, however, it is always a matter of **dosage**. A few years ago I wrote following in order to put this issue into some perspective:

"Alcohol can be extremely toxic and can kill you either quickly over time or by prolonged abuse. Yet countless studies show that moderate alcohol consumption can be excellent for your health. Consider also, do you ever swim in a pool or drink tap water? Of course both are treated with chlorine which, at the right dose, is about as deadly a substance as you can find anywhere, but used properly is a benefit to human health. Sodium Hydroxide which was spilled in bulk quantities in that CN train derailment near Squamish and killed fish in a river, is a typical and harmless ingredient in most soaps we use every day. Have you or

your children ever picked-up head lice? Well, the only shampoo able to kill the bugs is really just an insecticidal soap -- and you have to scrub your head with it! Have you ever used mosquito repellent on your skin? Well, it's a chemical too. I could go on.

The reason why some municipal governments have passed bans on safe pesticide use isn't because there is a greater awareness or environmental responsibility at the local level, but rather, municipal governments are by far the easiest level of government for the irrational anti-pesticide lobby to 'pick-off'.... In spite of people living longer and healthier lives than ever before, we are increasingly, and irrationally, afraid of the latest and trendiest health scares.

When it comes to the safe use of pesticides, a one-liter squirt bottle of Federally-approved selective herbicide or insecticide used occasionally in my family's garden is of absolutely no health threat to anyone. However, my adjacent neighbour's noxious 'Horse Tail' weeds and spreading blackberry vines are a direct threat to the use and enjoyment of my garden which my family takes pride in, and spends a great deal of time and money, not to mention hard work, to maintain and keep beautiful thereby benefiting the surrounding neighbourhood."

Sincerely,
Brian Platts

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