

## Pesticide spraying hearing in Bangor

### Aerial application rules to be reviewed

By [Kevin Miller](#)

BDN Staff

State regulators will hold a public hearing Friday in Bangor on a proposal to tighten the rules on aerial spraying of pesticides near homes, businesses and other areas where people would be at risk of exposure.

Maine's Board of Pesticides Control has been working for about two years to update its rules governing aerial spraying and what is known as "pesticide drift," which is when winds or other factors carry the chemicals beyond the targeted area.

The issue has been most contentious in Washington and Hancock counties, where helicopters and planes are used to spray pesticides on some wild blueberry barrens.

The public hearing, which is scheduled for 9 a.m. Friday at the Bangor Motor Inn on Hogan Road, will focus on several substantive changes proposed to the board's aerial spraying and notification rules.

Those changes include:

— **Prohibiting** aerial spraying of pesticides within 200 feet of "sensitive areas likely to be occupied," which include homes, buildings, some public roads and recreational areas. A 200-foot buffer would not be needed if neighbors do not object to spraying, however.

— **Requiring** pesticide applicators to prepare maps of sensitive areas within 500 feet of the targeted site as well as pre-application site plans whenever spraying within 1,000 feet of sensitive areas.

— **Requiring** pesticide applicators to check whether people living or working within 1,000 feet of a targeted area want to be notified before spraying.

— **Clarification** of procedures regarding notifications and requesting a notification.

Henry Jennings, director of the pesticides board, said most of the proposed changes would apply only in situations where people may come in contact with the pesticides. The rules would not affect spraying in areas far from people or in cases where neighbors do not want to be notified.

Under pressure from environmental groups, several of Maine's larger blueberry growers agreed to halt aerial spraying.

But Jennings pointed out that some of those same organizations as well as grass-roots community groups also have petitioned the board in the past to ban all aerial spraying. And spraying has been the subject of several bills introduced into the Legislature in recent years.

"They were all indicative that there was a lot of public concern about this," Jennings said.

David Bell, executive director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine, cautioned that any rules should be flexible enough to accommodate the best management plans for individual sites.

Bell gave one example of where growers apply pesticides to the perimeter of fields, thereby impeding pests such as fruit flies from spreading to neighboring blueberry barrens. That can reduce the total amount of pesticide needed

because growers would not need to treat the interior of the fields, he said.

One-size-fits-all regulations, such as buffer zone, could prevent that type of pest management, Bell said.

“[Pest] management has become much more sophisticated and therefore much more complex,” he said.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. at the Bangor Motor Inn at 701 Hogan Road.

The Board of Pesticides Control will accept written comments on the proposed rule changes through Dec. 3. Written comments should be sent to Henry Jennings, Director, Board of Pesticides Control, 28 State House Station, Augusta 04333-0028.

Comments also can be e-mailed to [henry.jennings@maine.gov](mailto:henry.jennings@maine.gov).

For more information about the proposed rules, go to [www.thinkfirstspraylast.org](http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org).

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## Growers split on rules for aerial spraying

**At issue: Proposals governing notification, drift, site plans**

**By Kevin Miller**

BDN Staff

BANGOR, Maine — State regulators struggled Friday to find a way to allow aerial spraying of pesticides on farmland while strengthening rules designed to protect the public from being exposed to the potentially toxic chemicals.

Several homeowners and representatives of Maine's organic farming community urged the Board of Pesticides Control to move forward with a proposal that, in many cases, would prohibit aerial application of pesticides within 200 feet of homes, buildings and public roads.

The proposed rules, which are still under development, also would rewrite the state's requirements for when growers must notify neighbors about planned use of pesticides.

"Maximizing profit ... should not be allowed to take over the health and well-being of not only residents of this state but also visitors," Deborah Aldridge, owner of the organic berry farm Hatch Knoll Farm in Jonesboro, told board members during a public hearing.

But numerous growers of blueberries and other crops countered that the existing notification rules have worked well in recent years. The opponents forecast that requiring a buffer between sprayed fields and so-called "sensitive areas," especially public roads, would harm many smaller farmers.

"The 200-foot buffer would eliminate most of my blueberry fields," said Molly Sholes, proprietor of Spruce Mountain Blueberries in West Rockport.

The controversy in Maine over aerial spraying of pesticides dates back several decades.

The state passed the first rules intended to address concerns over exposure to pesticide "drift" in the mid-1980s. Those rules have been tweaked several times, and new notification procedures were added.

But this is the first substantial rewrite of the rules undertaken by the Board of Pesticides Control.

Board members on Friday repeatedly pressed speakers for ideas on how to resolve some of the long-running sticking points, such as setting an acceptable level of pesticide drift, but often received few concrete suggestions.

While opponents accused the board of basing the draft rules on emotion and fear rather than science, supporters countered that pesticide users lack definitive evidence showing that exposure to pesticide drift is not harmful.

Under the proposed rules, a 200-foot buffer would not be needed if neighbors do not object to spraying.

The proposed rules also would:

- Require farm operations to prepare maps of sensitive areas within 500 feet of the targeted site as well as pre-application site plans whenever spraying within 1,000 feet of sensitive areas.
- Require growers or applicators to check annually whether people living or working within 1,000 feet of a targeted area want to be notified before spraying.

Require growers to post signs at public places, such as a picnic area or near trails, at least 24 hours before application.

Charles Corliss, recreational trails coordinator for the state Department of Conservation, estimated that one-quarter of the 800 miles of trails in Washington and Hancock counties are in blueberry fields. Corliss said he and others fear the rules could lead to the closure of many public-access trails on private farmland.

A representative for one of Maine's largest blueberry growers, Jasper Wyman & Son, said trail closures were a distinct possibility. Darin Hammond, the company's senior manager for farm operations, also questioned the legality of the proposed buffer.

"Imposing a 200-foot buffer along the public roads, in my opinion, may be a violation of Maine's Right to Farm law," Hammond said.

Others said the proposed notification rules would be most problematic for larger agricultural operations with many neighbors — such as those in Aroostook County — especially when weather forces last-minute changes in pesticide applications.

Supporters of the draft rules disagreed that the current regulations and notification procedures are working well, however.

Speakers told stories of people being doused with pesticides while driving down public roads and of people or animals becoming ill when the chemicals drifted into their homes or yards. Others said growers don't always follow existing notification rules, even when neighbors ask to be told in advance about spraying.

Heather Spalding, associate director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, said that while the proposed rules are not perfect, her organization believes progress is being made. She urged the board to follow California's lead and require a 700-foot buffer between fields being sprayed and sensitive areas.

Spalding also said organic farmers deserve more protections than proposed because they stand to lose so much when their fields are contaminated by pesticides drifting from nearby farms.

Public comments will be accepted on the proposed rules through Dec. 10. Written comments should be sent to Henry Jennings, director, Board of Pesticides Control, 28 State House Station, Augusta 04333-0028.

E-mail comments to [henry.jennings@maine.gov](mailto:henry.jennings@maine.gov).

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# Maine Public Broadcasting Network

## Organic Food Advocates Blast Government Proposal

November 21, 2008    Reported By: Anne Ravana

Local organic food advocates are speaking out and encouraging other Mainers to do the same in response to changes the U.S. Department of Agriculture has put forth regarding rules on genetically modified crops. The new regulations would preempt existing state and local regulations related to the presence of such crops.

Last year, Maine became the final state in the nation to approve the growing of BT corn, the genetically modified grain with a built-in pesticide that wards off bugs. But some organic farmers and growers disapproved. They worried that extensive use of the crop would make insects resistant to the BT toxin, a naturally occurring pesticide that's used sparingly in organic farming. In fact, the town of Montville this past spring voted to place a 10-year moratorium on the cultivation of BT corn and any other genetically modified crops in town.

Now, in the final months of the Bush Administration, the USDA says it is proposing new regulations on the importation, interstate movement, and release of some genetically engineered organisms. The USDA also wants to change the enforcement terms of its rules. What used to read "No State or local laws or regulations would be preempted by this rule" will be changed to read "All State and local laws or regulations that are inconsistent with this rule will be preempted."

"These regulations that are proposed and may very well be enacted if people don't take action would strip that ability away from states and local governments to take action. It takes everybody but the feds out of the mix." Robert Fish is the executive director of the nonprofit Food for Maine's Future. He has launched an effort to get Mainers to submit comments to the USDA about the change in terms. Fish acknowledges there are a wide variety of opinions on genetically modified crops, with some people viewing them as the future of agriculture while others see them as a threat to environmental health. "Regardless of which side of the debate you're on, it's really important to make clear to our state and federal officials that we have a right to have a say. Genetically modified crops are unlabeled, the testing has been weak, a lot of countries around the world don't even allow them. It's a big experiment that could go horribly wrong."

Russell Libby, Executive Director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, says his organization opposes the USDA's change for two reasons. "This is basically a presumption that they know best, and we know that that's not always the case. Second, Maine has gone through a very public and continuing process of trying to find balance points and last year the Board of Pesticides Control came up with a process and procedures that allow good communication between farmers and their neighbors."

The members of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control say they were not aware of the proposed rule changes until this week, when they received a flood of emails from concerned residents. The Board today declined to comment on the situation, but members say they are concerned about any reversal of the work they have done to balance the concerns of commercial and organic growers around the state.

Rachel Iadicicco, spokesperson for the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service says the changes to the terms of the regulations are actually a "correction." "This is a correction to a proposed rule. And it's not that we anticipate this happening, but as with the current regulation federal law can preempt state law and whether or not this occurs is addressed on a case by case basis." Iadicicco says the rule changes are not subject to a vote before Congress. "The proposed rule itself reflects an ongoing process that's been going on for several years. We've done a draft environmental impact statement and we're seeking public comment. Public comment is a very important part of the rulemaking process and that input is used in the development of the final rule."

Public comments on the rules or the change to their terms can be submitted online and are due on Monday.

## Crop pests changing with pesticides, GM

Anna Salleh

ABC

Increasing pesticide use is changing the profile of insect and other pests that Australian farmers must contend with, and GM crops are set to bring their own changes, say experts.

Ecological geneticist Dr Andrew Weeks from the [University of Melbourne](#) and colleagues report their findings in the *Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture* .

In the first study of its kind, Weeks and colleagues compared recent reports of winter grain pests with those dating back as far as 1980.

In both Victoria and Western Australia they found pests such as armyworms and pea weevils have declined, but other pests such as mites and lucerne fleas have been on the rise.

"One of the big things that we found was that a couple of species of mites, which weren't even really recorded early on, had become quite prevalent now," says Weeks, who is based at the [Centre for Environmental Stress and Adaptation Research](#) .

Unfortunately, he says mites are one of the harder pests to control.

While some of these changes are likely to be associated with drier climates, the researchers say that there has also been an increase in pesticide use.

Weeks says drought-stressed farmers worried about losing their crop to pests have been carrying out extra "insurance" sprays of pesticides before they put in their crops.

"While pesticide use has increased, it's knocking out a lot of your other pests but it's not harming these [the mites] as much," says Weeks.

He adds, the greater herbicide use has also led to a decline beneficial species like carabid beetles that are effective predators of slugs and snails.

Weeks says the drought has also encouraged many farmers to reduce the tillage of their soil, by using herbicides to kill stubble in the ground to reduce evaporation, but this may help slugs and snails to thrive.

### GM crops

New agricultural technologies, such as GM crops, are also likely to be a driver in changing the pests that farmers have. For example, he says, canola which has been genetically modified to be resistant to herbicides will enable farmers to e. While this will lead to a decrease in pests that harbour in weeds, it may lead to the rise in pests that can survive in such. He says the absence of weeds may also reduce the number of beneficial organisms that act as a natural check on pests.

"If you've got a very barren landscape ... the chances are the pests are going to be greater," says Weeks.

He says further understanding will be needed to cope with these pests, but so far there has been no research in Australia. management of herbicide tolerant canola will affect pests.

"It's one of weak points at this stage of the whole GM debate," he says.

Crops engineered to exude the Bt insecticidal toxin are likely to reduce pesticide applications, Weeks and colleagues add. But a major concern is the development of resistance in the insects they are designed to control, the researchers say.

This resistance can be delayed with the use of "refuges" of non-GM crop, they add.

"This, however, may not always be the case, and any new insecticidal transgene incorporated into crop plants must be organisms and ecosystems," the researchers write.

The research was funded by the [Grains Research and Development Corporation](#) .

## GMO crop critics fear USDA will ease regulations

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Fri Nov 21, 2008 4:04pm EST

By Carey Gillam

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (Reuters) - Critics of biotech crops were trying to head off rule changes by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the waning days of the Bush Administration that the critics said would ease restrictions on the controversial crops.

"USDA is laying the statutory groundwork to eliminate a lot of genetically modified plants from any regulation at all, even at the field test stage," said Center for Food Science policy analyst Bill Freese.

Monday is the deadline for comments on proposals that could impact how a range of genetically modified organisms are regulated, as well as limit state and local government regulation of such crops.

There is also language that would formalize an existing policy providing that low levels of contamination by unauthorized biotech crops would not necessarily require remedial action.

Several environmental, consumers and farm groups alarmed at the details of the changes are urging members to sign petitions opposing the changes.

"We want to stop these last-ditch attempts by the Bush Administration to put through bad genetic engineering rules," said Anne Petermann, co-director of the Global Justice Ecology Project.

The USDA and its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which regulates certain genetically engineered organisms including plant pests that may damage crops and other plants, have been revising their policies after coming under criticism for lax oversight practices.

Last year, a judge found USDA acted illegally when it allowed unrestricted commercial planting of Monsanto Co's "Roundup Ready" biotech alfalfa without fully analyzing the environmental impact.

USDA has said the new rules came after comprehensive review and would allow USDA to provide effective oversight of the technology.

APHIS spokeswoman Rachel Iadicicco said the goals were to insure the safe development and use of certain genetically engineered organisms while reducing the "regulatory burden."

"There are some things in there to lessen the regulatory burden but also we want to ensure that the organisms are overseen appropriately," she said.

Iadiciccio said all public comments would be considered.

Biotech critics said one particular concern deals with language that states "all state and local laws or regulations that are inconsistent... (with APHIS rules) will be preempted."

That potentially could impact actions like that seen last month in Hawaii where a county council recently banned growing biotech coffee as well as taro.

Genetically modified crops, particularly corn and soybeans that are resistant to herbicide, are popular with U.S. farmers. St. Louis, Mo.-based Monsanto Co is the leading developer of such crops.

In all, 23 countries allow the cultivation of biotech crops, but much of Europe, Japan, and most of Africa remain opposed to genetically altered crops.

Opponents say genetically altered crops can hurt human and animal health and damage the environment. And many farmers fear they will lose customers if their nongenetically altered crops are contaminated with the biotech varieties.

A recent study out of Austria indicated a correlation between genetically engineered corn and infertility, prompting the Center for Food Safety to call for a moratorium on the distribution of genetically engineered foods until the risk can be further assessed.

(Reporting by Carey Gillam; Editing by Marguerita Choy)

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for a healthy maine



## Fish Named 2008 Friend of Casco Bay

Gary Fish, coordinator of the Maine YardScaping Partnership, and manager of pesticide programs at the [Maine Board of Pesticides Control](#), is the recipient of the [Friends of Casco Bay 2008 Friend of Casco Bay Award](#). The award is given to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to improving and protecting the environmental health of Casco Bay.

Award Citation:

*"For more than a decade, Gary Fish of Wayne, Maine, has worked to make Casco Bay a healthier place for marine life and the people who live around it by teaching homeowners, gardeners, and landscapers how to 'grow green lawns that keep Casco Bay blue.' Fish, who is the manager of pesticide certification and reduction programs for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, helped launch the BayScaping program to reduce dependence on fertilizers and pesticides."*

The award was presented to Fish at the 2008 Friends of Casco Bay Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Event, held at Cole Haan Headquarters in Yarmouth, on October 29.



*Gary Fish (center), being presented with the 2008 Friend of Casco Bay Award, by FOCB Executive Director Cathy Ramsdell and Casco BAYKEEPER Joe Payne.*

PRESS RELEASE

Friends of Casco Bay / Casco Baykeeper  
43 Slocum Drive \$ South Portland \$ ME 04106  
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**Attachments:** 2008 FOCB Award.JPG

*Photo Caption:* (l to r) Friends of Casco Bay Executive Director Cathy Ramsdell, Gary Fish, winner of the 2008 Friend of Casco Bay Award, and Casco Baykeeper Joe Payne.



### A True Friend of Casco Bay

For immediate release  
October 31, 2008

For more information, contact  
Mary Cerullo, 207-799-8574,

[mcerullo@cascobay.org](mailto:mcerullo@cascobay.org)

Although Gary Fish of Wayne, Maine, lives many miles from the shores of Casco Bay, he has worked to make it a healthier place for marine life and for the people who live around it. For over a decade, he has taught homeowners, gardeners, and landscapers how to “grow green lawns that keep Casco Bay blue.” Fish is the manager of pesticide certification and reduction programs for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control. Along with Friends of Casco Bay, he helped to launch BayScaping, a program to reduce the escalating residential use of fertilizers and pesticides. Water quality testing by Friends of Casco Bay conclusively demonstrated that pesticides and fertilizers were flowing into our coastal waters. Together, Maine Board of Pesticides Control and Friends of Casco Bay developed educational materials and outreach campaigns to convince homeowners and lawn care professionals to reduce their use of toxic lawn chemicals. Through Fish’s efforts, this BayScaping partnership has since expanded into a statewide collaboration called YardScaping.

In recognition of his commitment to protecting the environmental health of the Bay, Friends of Casco Bay gave Gary Fish its *2008 Friend of Casco Bay Award* on October 29<sup>th</sup>. In presenting the award, Friends of Casco Bay Executive Director Cathy Ramsdell applauded his dedication by humorously introducing him as the “Apostle of Pesticide Prevention.” In accepting the award, Fish said he was just a catalyst of change and referred to the many partners in YardScaping, including Friends of Casco Bay.

Friends of Casco Bay/Casco BAYKEEPER® works to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay through advocacy, education, water quality monitoring, and collaborative partnerships. The award presentation was made at its Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation event.

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by Heather Spalding, MOFGA Associate Director

Organic blueberry farmer Deborah Aldridge of Jonesboro was nominated by Gov. Baldacci to fill the environmental seat on the Maine Board of Pesticides Control — a seat that has been vacant since the summer of 2007. On August 19, 2008, the Legislature's Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry voted 7-3 against recommending Aldridge for the post. Clearly, behind-the-scenes lobbying by some conventional agriculture groups and farmers influenced the Committee vote.

After an hour and a half of antagonizing questioning, Committee chair Senator John Nutting cast the first "No" vote against Aldridge. Senator Roger Sherman and Representatives Jacqueline Lundeen, Donald Marean, Peter Edgecomb, Dean Cray and Jeffery Gifford followed suit. Only Rep. Tim Carter, Sen. Margaret Rotundo and Rep. John Piotti voted for Aldridge. Representative Wendy Pieh was absent due to a family medical situation. Representatives Benjamin Pratt and Pineau also were absent.

MOFGA believes that nothing was controversial about Aldridge's nomination. She is extremely bright, thoughtful, experienced and committed. She was nominated to fill a public seat representing environmental interests. That she is an organic farmer (and has been a conventional grower) should have been valued as a bonus qualification, not counted against her.

Aldridge was grilled by committee members who feared she wanted to ban all uses of pesticides. She eloquently explained that she understood that there were reasonable uses for pesticides and various methods of application—including aerial spraying. She had MOFGA's full support as well as that of the staff of the BPC and other members of the BPC—one of whom testified for her at the hearing.

Aldridge has been a member of the Jonesboro Planning Board and has had experience working with committees and finding common ground and resolutions. She works hard to educate people in her community about the different kinds of farming, and has the support of many blueberry growers from Down East. She is not a controversial figure among growers.

The Board has had a void and an imbalance for many months since Lee Humphreys, also an organic farmer, stepped down. Aldridge has very similar qualifications to Humphreys. The two reappointed BPC members attending the hearing in August testified in favor of bringing balance back to the monthly discussions by voting for Aldridge.

Aldridge and her husband Peter have been driving from Jonesboro to Fairfield or Waterville to attend BPC meetings as public citizens for several months. They continue to do so despite the Ag Committee's rejection.

Given the Ag Committee's failure to appoint Aldridge, the seat will remain open at least until January 2009. Let's hope that the next nominee for the environmental health seat on the BPC is not subjected to the disgraceful treatment that Aldridge endured in August.

Please encourage Governor Baldacci and members of the Ag Committee to appoint to the environmental health seat a thoughtful and dedicated champion of organic farming and gardening — someone like Deborah Aldridge.

Governor Baldacci: Phone—207-287-3531; Fax: 207-287-1034; Email: Go to <http://maine.gov/governor/baldacci/index.shtml>, click on "Contact Us" and then "Share Your Views."

Ag Committee: Phone: 207-287-1692; Fax: 207-287-1580; Email: [Melissa.Wright@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Melissa.Wright@legislature.maine.gov)

*MOFGA will continue to monitor monthly BPC meetings and summarize proceedings for our publications.*

**SFGate.com**

## Aerial pesticide spraying put people at risk

Mike Lynberg

Thursday, November 13, 2008



The state's long-awaited report on the human health risks of aerial pesticide spraying for the light brown apple moth was released last week. The report says what thousands of outraged people from Monterey to Marin County had feared: the product sprayed put some people at risk.

"We cannot exclude the possibility that one or more ingredients in the LBAM product could cause an allergic response in sensitive individuals," reads the report, issued by the Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and the Department of Public Health.

The report acknowledges that some of the ailments suffered by people in the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas - namely asthma and reactive airway disease - "may be associated with exposure to a sensitizer or allergen."

Furthermore, the report says the product sprayed last year on densely populated Central Coast neighborhoods caused white blood cells to multiply at an "abnormally high rate" in the lymph nodes of the test animals.

Nonetheless, state Secretary A. G. Kawamura of the California Department of Food and Agriculture continues to say in a press release, "This study was important to reassure Californians that we always have public safety in mind."

Actually, the study does quite the opposite.

It reveals that aerial spraying, which was ended in residential areas in June because of widespread public protests, could have jeopardized people's health. It demonstrates that the CDFA did not really know the consequences of its actions, and that Secretary Kawamura's promises have been based more on wishes than science.

Late last year, an 11-month-old boy was admitted to the hospital and nearly died immediately after his Monterey neighborhood was aerial sprayed. The doctors' diagnosis: reactive airway disease. Now the boy, who was healthy before the spraying, has asthma.

The boy was one of hundreds of people made sick in the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas when their neighborhoods were essentially crop-dusted with a synthetic pheromone mixture. Seventy-four doctors filed pesticide illness reports. Several people ended up in emergency rooms.

There is more in the new report to validate the outrage many people felt about aerial spraying. State agencies now say there is a "paucity of data" on long-term exposure to the pesticides. Lab animals were tested for very short periods of time, whereas people in the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas were exposed to chemicals that persisted in the air for 30 to 60 days.

The report also admits that laboratory tests on a small number of animals might not be an adequate predictor of human health effects when large numbers of people - with different levels of sensitivity - are exposed to a pesticide.

Finally, the state's report acknowledges that officials grossly underestimated the number of microparticles in the spray, those small enough to reach a person's deep lung tissue and enter the bloodstream. The American Lung Association cautions that such particulate matter is dangerous to human health.

Although it erodes the agency's credibility, Secretary Kawamura and other CDFA officials continue to say the aerial spraying was harmless. Now they are promising that other LBAM eradication tactics will be safe, including the many pheromone-laced twist ties they plan to hang in residential neighborhoods all over Northern and Central California.

Recent information on the moth eradication program makes clear what many people have suspected: The CDFA's program has been a grand - or grave - experiment on the people's health without their informed consent.

Mike Lynberg, an author and communication consultant in Pacific Grove, collected hundreds of illness complaints after aerial spraying on the Central Coast, and forwarded them to state agencies, elected officials and the press.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/11/13/ED9R143AFM.DTL>

This article appeared on page **B - 9** of the San Francisco Chronicle

# Pesticides more dangerous than thought

Published: Nov. 13, 2008 at 5:01 PM

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PITTSBURGH, Nov. 13 (UPI) -- U.S. scientists studying 10 of the world's most popular approved pesticides say, when combined, the chemicals caused 99 percent mortality in tadpoles.

University of Pittsburgh researchers said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved pesticides, when mixed together, can decimate amphibian populations even if the concentration of the individual chemicals is within limits considered safe.

Such "cocktails of contaminants" are frequently detected in nature, the scientists said, noting their findings offer the first illustration of how a large mixture of pesticides can adversely impact the environment.

Associate Professor Rick Relyea, the study's lead author, exposed gray tree frog and leopard frog tadpoles to small amounts of the 10 pesticides -- insecticides carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, endosulfan, and malathion, as well as five herbicides: acetochlor, atrazine, glyphosate, metolachlor, and 2,4-D.

He used each of the pesticides alone, the insecticides combined, a mix of the five herbicides, or all 10 of the poisons.

Relyea found a mixture of all 10 chemicals killed 99 percent of leopard frog tadpoles, as did the insecticide-only mixture.

The study is detailed in the [online edition](#) of the journal *Oecologia*.

## **Cancer Society Turns Sights to Farm Pesticides**

*Agency holding conference with leading scientists on hotly contested issue of restricting agricultural bug and weed killers*

**By Martin Mittelstaedt**

**Globe and Mail, November 12, 2008**

### **Straight to the Source**

For years, the Canadian Cancer Society has argued in favour of bans on the cosmetic use of pesticides around homes and gardens. But it has remained silent on the country's biggest use of bug and weed killers: on farms.

Now, the society is considering weighing in on whether these sprays pose a cancer risk to farmers, other rural residents near them, and to the wider public from eating foods carrying pesticide residues.

To that end, the society is holding a conference starting today at which it has assembled experts to advise it on whether cosmetic-pesticide restrictions, which now exist in Ontario, Quebec and many municipalities, should be followed by tougher action against the use of the sprays in agriculture. The society doesn't have a view on the related issue of whether organically grown foods are a better option, a topic that will also be discussed.

"We're bringing the world's leading scientists together to help us understand the science and what we know and don't know and where we could take action, if it's warranted," said Heather Logan, the society's director of cancer-control policy.

In deliberating on possible cancer risks of pesticides, the society is wading into one of the most vociferously contested fields of science and regulation. Health Canada and the pesticide industry say that products licensed for use are extensively tested, and present no risk to farmers or consumers.

"In terms of any risk, health risk, Health Canada will only approve pesticides that do not pose a health risk, provided that the label directions are followed," said Connie Moase, a director in the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, Health Canada's watchdog.

But pesticide opponents, including some respected public-health groups, argue that pesticides are strong poisons designed to kill if used as directed. They contend that Health Canada and industry play down research linking occupational exposures to bug and weed sprays to greater risks of many cancers, such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Those worried about pesticides also say the cancer society policy is contradictory because it deems use on residential lawns and gardens as dangerous and needing to be banned, while ignoring the far greater use on farms. One estimate, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2005, found that about five times more 2,4-D, the main weed killer subject to cosmetic-pesticide bans, was used on farms as on lawns.

## Popular weed killer pulled

Herbicide/fertilizer pellets blamed for contaminating rivers, killing birds

**Jamie Hall and Keith Gerein, with files from Sarah**

The Edmonton Journal

Friday, November 14, 2008

EDMONTON - The province's decision to ban weed-and-feed style products will force homeowners to take a more environmentally friendly approach to lawn care, garden centre operators say.

"There will be some initial panic, especially from people who have relied on good old weed-and-feed, and are used to just throwing pellets on their lawn every spring, but after a little education, I don't see it being a big problem at all," Greenland Garden Centre manager Tina Burback said.

The province announced Thursday it will ban the sale of granular-type lawn-care products that combine herbicide and fertilizer, known generically as weed-and-feed, on Jan 1, 2010.

Environment Department officials said the chemical 2, 4-D used in these combination products is "very mobile," and regularly turns up in water downstream from urban areas.

"This is a simple measure that Albertans can take to curb the amount of chemicals entering our water," Environment Minister Rob Renner said.

The pellets, or prills, as they're called, are popular with many gardeners because of their convenience. They feed the lawn and eliminate weeds at the same time.

The problem is with the application, or, in this case, the over-application.

More than 10 times the required amount of herbicide can be strewn on lawns, with the excess eventually running into storm drains, then ending up in creeks and rivers.

Products intended for spot application to kill weeds will still be sold to consumers.

Cherry Dodd, an environmental advocate with Pesticide Free Edmonton, said she has been waiting for such a ban.



CREDIT: Ed Kaiser/Edmonton Journal  
Jim Hole at Hole's Garden Centre posing with a bag of weed and feed which will soon be banned. In back on the shelf are items that likely will not be banned.

She said Alberta Environment deserves credit for recognizing the dangers of the weed-and-feed products.

Dodd said the granules are also a danger to birds, which mistake them for pieces of grit used help them grind up their food. "The birds ingest them and then they become poisoned."

She said her group would prefer to see all pesticides banned in Edmonton, but getting rid of the lawn pellets is a good start.

"They're the worst," she said. "This is a very important step."

Linda Hall, a herbicide scholar at the University of Alberta, said 2,4-D is much more effective and safe when it is sprayed, rather than spread on the grass in pellet form.

The man-made chemical "isn't terribly toxic, but anything in the water we can prevent is a good idea," she said

Hall said fertilizer used by itself can make the lawn stronger and more competitive against weeds. Then, if a herbicide is needed, spot spraying is the way to go.

Some estimates suggest 180 times more herbicide is used with a treatment of granules compared with spot-spraying, she said.

"A little squirt on the dandelions is a much smarter way to do this. It's much more effective and much safer for the environment."

Jim Hole of Hole's Garden Centre sells "quite a few tonnes" of weed-and-feed products every year, but said the ban wouldn't have a significant impact on his financial bottom line.

"Even if it did, it wouldn't matter," said Hole, "because (banning) it is the right thing to do."

Burback said many garden centres, Greenland and Hole's among them, long ago sought alternative products, with a view to minimizing the use of chemicals.

Burback said Greenland carries a variety of organic fertilizers and organic herbicides, and last year introduced a product called corn gluten, which attacks the seedlings of weeds, yet feeds the lawn.

"We've received a lot of positive feedback from customers," she said.

Hole said that 10 years ago, 60 to 70 per cent of his customers would buy weed-and-feed because of its ease and simplicity.

"Over the past few years, though, there's slowly been this understanding by people that they need to make sure their lawn is vigorous and strong and can stand the invasion of weeds, so that you only need to spot-treat it," Hole said.

The right soil, high-quality grass seed, proper irrigation and a correct mowing height are all factors which contribute to a healthy lawn, he added.

Doug Kirchner, director of operations for Edmonton's parks branch, said the provincial ban is something the city and other communities have lobbied for since 2005.

"We don't use the product at all, simply because we clearly know what it does and how harmful it can be," he said.

Liberal MLA David Swann, a doctor who worked in the public health field, welcomed the government's decision.

"To put the public well-being ahead of individual rights is a big step for this government," he said.

Edmonton bylaw enforcement officer Ryan Pleckaitis doesn't think the ban will necessarily increase his workload.

As it is, Pleckaitis and his staff of five responded to more than 5,000 complaints between May and October.

Their job is to enforce the weed control act, which is designed to control the spread of noxious and restricted weeds within city boundaries, in residential neighbourhoods and on commercial and industrial properties.

"We always recommend to people that they cut the weeds down; it's the most esthetically pleasing," Pleckaitis said.

Larry Radomske, owner of Green Drop in Edmonton, said he supports the province's ban.

"Pesticides get a bad rap sometimes, but they are safe when used properly, mixed properly and applied properly," he said. "My feeling is that homeowners don't necessarily use it properly ... so this gets it out of homeowners' hands."

He said some municipalities in Canada have been moving to ban the use of weed-and-feed, but those bylaws aren't as powerful as provincewide legislation that can actually stop people from buying the product.

The Alberta ban won't affect his company, because it doesn't use combination products. His lawn-care staff use both herbicides and fertilizers, but not together at the same time, he said.

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# EMBASSY

October 22 2008 - [http://embassymag.ca/page/printpage/peterson\\_nafta-10-22-2008](http://embassymag.ca/page/printpage/peterson_nafta-10-22-2008)

## U.S. Chemical Company Challenges Pesticide Ban

by Luke Eric Peterson

The issue of free trade was largely a non-issue during our recent federal election.

However, the North American Free Trade Agreement might have garnered a few headlines if the Feds had disclosed that U.S. chemical giant Dow signalled in late August that it is gearing up to sue Canada.

Dow Agrosiences insists Quebec's province-wide ban on the residential use of weed-killing chemicals breaches legal protections owed by Canada to U.S. investors under the NAFTA.

The U.S. company, which has an extensive manufacturing and sales operation in Canada, wants to be compensated by the Feds for losses incurred to its star product, 2,4-D, one of the most popular chemical ingredients used in commercial pesticides.

The Dow claim is the latest in a long string of disputes to arise under Chapter 11 of the NAFTA—a legal back channel which permits foreign investors to detour around local courts and sue the federal government before an international tribunal.

The company triggered a 90-day waiting period in August, after which it can bring the federal government to binding arbitration.

For cross-border investors, these types of legal protections can come in handy if a tin-pot dictator sends in the tanks and seizes your factories or oil fields. But when such legal provisions are invoked by foreign investors in an effort to ward off health or environmental regulations, eyebrows drift skyward.

Kathleen Cooper, a senior researcher with the Canadian Environmental Law Association, says the Quebec ban has been warmly endorsed by medical and environmental organizations—and enjoys wide support in public opinion surveys. She's troubled that chemical producers can invoke NAFTA in an effort to "undermine the decisions of democratically-elected governments."

The spectre of a NAFTA lawsuit comes at an auspicious moment.

The Province of Ontario has signalled that it will follow Quebec's lead, passing legislation earlier this year, and working on regulations that could come into force next spring.

Such regulatory moves will eventually draw wider attention and scrutiny in other jurisdictions—including the far more lucrative U.S. market. If the U.S. chemical industry hopes to avert a domino effect, it may need to borrow a page from the War on Terrorism tactics book: fighting tougher regulation abroad, so they don't have to fight it on the homefront.

For its part, Dow insists Quebec and Ontario are out of step with the international consensus on a product that has been used for decades in dozens of countries.

The company points to a 2007 risk assessment by Canada's own Pest Management Regulatory Agency which said the product could continue to be used safely on lawns. Dow stresses that Quebec's decision to ban certain uses of the product is not based on scientific evidence. Spokesperson Gary Hamelin says it is a real problem when companies are "making investments of tens of millions of dollars for products that—based on a scientific assessment—[are] acceptable."

While Dow jousts with its critics over the scientific evidence, Quebec (and now Ontario) have taken the view that more stringent standards should be imposed by provincial health regulators—particularly where the product is not necessary, but is

used for purely cosmetic purposes.

It could fall to a panel of three arbitrators to decide whether such provincial regulations run afoul of Canada's NAFTA commitments.

Of course, threatening to file a NAFTA claim is hardly a guarantee of success. Nevertheless, chemical producers seem to be warming to the NAFTA option.

Already, the government is defending against another NAFTA Chapter 11 claim filed by another U.S.-based chemical producer. When Canada's Pest Regulatory Management Agency moved to ban the use of Lindane-based seed treatments, U.S.-based Chemtura Corporation sued for \$100 million in damages. That arbitration is currently going on behind closed doors, following a January confidentiality order.

One wonders if this is the tip of the legal iceberg. After all, the Feds are now undertaking a broad review of thousands of under-tested chemicals currently on the market.

Just last week, the government added the controversial substance Bisphenol A (BPA)—which is used widely in plastics—to a registry of toxic substances. Although there are no immediate plans to ban the use of the substance as a lining in food and drink cans, it is very likely that BPA will be eliminated from polycarbonate baby bottles.

It remains to be seen whether tougher regulations on BPA and other chemicals will also be challenged under NAFTA Chapter 11.

For almost two months, the federal government has been mum about the latest legal salvo from Dow.

Although Dow formally signalled its intentions in late August—setting in motion a 90-day consultation period—the Department of Foreign Affairs only disclosed the potential lawsuit yesterday.

Until now, Canadian taxpayers—who foot the bill to defend NAFTA lawsuits and pay any compensation awarded by arbitrators—have been denied the opportunity to weigh in with their own views on the matter.

However, given that nearly 7,000 members of the public submitted comments on the Ontario Government's proposed pesticides ban, one can guess that the Feds will receive plenty of feedback in the weeks to come.

*Luke Eric Peterson is a columnist for Embassy and the editor of an investigative reporting service tracking NAFTA-style arbitrations, the Investment Arbitration Reporter (www.iareporter.com).*

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[http://embassymag.ca/page/printpage/peterson\\_nafta-10-22-2008](http://embassymag.ca/page/printpage/peterson_nafta-10-22-2008)

## **Cosmetic pesticides should be banned in N.B.**

Published Tuesday October 14th, 2008

**D7** By Lee-Anne Lavell and Lynsey Wilson  
Conservation Council of N.B.

New Brunswick has a drug problem. Substance abuse results in increased risk for various health and environmental concerns.

It's a situation that's putting entire communities in danger. There is legislation coming into effect in neighbouring provinces that is cracking down on the sale and use of these substances.

That's right, we're talking about cosmetic pesticides.

The government is considering strategies for the management of cosmetic pesticides in the province. Four options have been presented for public review and the public is invited to submit their opinions to the government until Oct. 15, tomorrow.

Right now in New Brunswick, cosmetic pesticides can be legally used to keep lawns looking their greenest. But this is in appearance only.

A number of studies by concerned health and environmental organizations, including the Ontario College of Family Physicians and Toronto Public Health, have shown strong correlations between pesticide use and increased risk for a number of cancers, particularly testicular and colon cancers.

The severe potential chronic effects of pesticide exposure illustrate one clear course of action for the provincial government: a total ban on the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides.

Health Canada has deemed a certain level of pesticides in a person's body to be safe. However, this level is for men, not taking into account acceptable amounts for women and children.

Children are especially susceptible to pesticide exposure because their smaller size means they absorb more chemicals per pound of body weight.

They're also more likely to ingest the chemicals by putting their hands in their mouths while playing outside. An acceptable level of certain chemicals does not necessarily mean they are desirable for consumption.

Furthermore, many consumers overuse the chemical they purchase, meaning there's more pesticides being used than are intended by producers.

A province wide ban on the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides has proven to be successful in Quebec. According to Statistics Canada 2006 Households and the Environment Report, Quebec has the second lowest rate of household pesticide use in Canada at 15 per cent, a 50 per cent reduction since 1994.

The Pesticide Management Code prescribed by the Quebec Provincial Government, which was first introduced in March 2003, regulates all activities related to the sale and use of any pesticide. The aim is to prevent or mitigate the harmful effects on the health of humans, other living species, and the environment.

Those pesticides which are most toxic to human health and the environment are prohibited on lawns of public, semi-public and municipal properties. Since April 2006, the same regulations apply to private and commercial properties.

In June of this year Ontario banned the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides for private homeowner's lawns, to much applause from some health and environmental groups, such as The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment and the Canadian Cancer Society.

The ban, which will come into effect in January 2009, unifies the municipal regulations that have already been enacted by dozens of municipalities across the province. The provincial ban makes it much harder to break the law: with the removal of cosmetic pesticides from retail shelves across the province, people can no longer visit a neighbouring municipality to purchase them.

"Cide" is the Latin term "to kill," and pesticides do exactly that.

Although these chemical products rid lawns of pests and weeds, they also strip away soil nutrients and have harmful effects on the many "nicer" creatures that frequent our lawns, including songbirds and bumblebees.

Pesticides make lawns dependent upon them by removing the lawn's natural ability to survive, thus making it even more vulnerable to pests when the drugs wear off.

There are organic alternatives to maintaining a healthy lawn, which include basic practices such as leaving grass clippings on the ground after mowing.

New Brunswick has a drug problem. The health of our communities is at risk. Together, we can demand a safer environment for our children and families. We want drug-free lawns!

To share your opinion with the government, visit [www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/pest/index-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/pest/index-e.asp) today.

*Lee-Anne Lavell and Lynsey Wilson are Social Work students at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, and are working as interns for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.*



## Study: Groundwater Hasn't Retained Pesticide Contaminants

By **Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News**

11/25/2008

URL: <http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/news/news.asp?ID=7295/>

Results from a decade-long study by the U.S. Geological Survey show that groundwater throughout the United States hasn't retained a high concentration of pesticide contamination, despite the widespread use of such chemicals.

"The results of this study are encouraging for the future state of the nation's groundwater quality with respect to pesticides," said data analyzer Laura Bexfield in a news release. "Despite sustained use of many popular pesticides and the introduction of new ones, results as a whole did not indicate increasing detection rates or concentrations in shallow or drinking-water resources over the 10 years studied."

The study — published in the current issue of the *Journal of Environmental Quality* — is part of the USGS' National Water Quality Assessment Program and one of the first national studies on pesticides in groundwater.

In the study, samples taken from over 300 wells across the country from 1993-1995 were compared with samples taken from 2001-2003. They were analyzed for 80 compounds, and only six of the compounds were detected in water from at least 10 wells during both sampling time periods. The compounds detected occurred at concentrations more than 10 times lower than EPA drinking water standards.

A statement from the American Society of Agronomy — which publishes the *Journal of Environmental Quality* — notes that characterizing trends in the presence of pesticides and their concentrations in groundwater across a long period of time is important for determining how quickly such systems respond to changes in chemical use and in identifying compounds that may pose a threat to water quality.

## **US: Santa Cruz organic farmer awarded \$1 million for pesticide drift**

In a victory for the state's organic farmers, a Santa Cruz County jury has awarded a North Coast grower \$1 million in damages after deciding a pesticide company violated the farmer's rights when its chemicals drifted with the fog onto his organic crops. Jacobs Farms, which raises culinary herbs on about 120 acres in Wilder Ranch State Park, was preparing to leave the property if the chemical drift continued. Instead, the operation will stay, knowing area farmers will need to be much more careful or risk paying big fines, and organic farmers statewide now have a stronger case to seek redress should pesticides, even those applied properly, end up on their plants.

"I feel great. We were thrilled, very excited," said Brendan Miele, California production manager for Jacobs Farm, which grows in Watsonville, on the North Coast and in Pescadero. Lawyers for the defendant, Western Farm Service of Fresno, said they might appeal. "We feel this is going to impose a serious burden and concern to the industry," said Western Farms attorney Dale Dorfmeier.

Larry Jacobs with Jacobs Farms filed the suit more than a year ago after dill grown in 2006 on the Wilder land Jacobs rents from the state tested positive for organophosphate pesticide residue. Because the residue involved is not legally allowed on those herbs — organic or not — the entire \$500,000 crop was lost that year. In 2007, damages were estimated at more than \$2 million, Miele said.

The pesticide at issue is regularly used on neighboring fields of brussels sprouts to fight cabbage maggots and other annoyances. Tests by the county Agricultural Commissioner's Office confirmed pesticide residue on the herbs, according to a report from that office issued before the ruling. But under state code, a pesticide sprayer's responsibility to stop chemicals from drifting into other fields ends after the pesticide is applied, the report said.

As the pesticide was applied properly and did not blow away during the application, the ag office found no violation on the part of Western Farm Services at that time.

Dorfmeier said the commissioner's office, not the jury that ruled on Friday, interpreted the law correctly. "What this jury decision says is, one that sells or applies this product is going to be responsible for post-application movement of this material, regardless of whether it's under their control or not," Dorfmeier said. "This is movement by wind or fog lift off that happens days or weeks after we do a safe application."

Assemblyman John Laird, D-Santa Cruz, who has supported Jacobs Farms' efforts, was happy to hear of the ruling on Monday. "We worked hard with the county ag commissioner and many interested parties to try to address the issue of pesticide drift and organic farms," Laird said. "Between those efforts and this lawsuit, the hope is that drift will be taken much more seriously in the future."

Source: [mercurynews.com](http://mercurynews.com)

Publication date: 10/2/2008

## Using Electrons To Treat Organic Seeds

Main Category: [Water - Air Quality / Agriculture](#)

Also Included In: [Nutrition / Diet](#) | [Medical Devices / Diagnostics](#) | [Conferences](#)

Article Date: 13 Oct 2008

Whereas a few years ago, organic products were sold exclusively by small health-food stores, they can now be found in the majority of supermarkets. A growing number of consumers prefer to buy organic food that has been grown without the use of chemical pesticides. Conventional farming practice involves treating seeds with a mixture of chemicals: Fungicides to protect the emerging seedlings from attack by microscopic fungi, insecticides against wireworms, aphids and biting insects, herbicides to suppress weeds. Researchers at the Fraunhofer Institute for Electron Beam and Plasma Technology FEP in Dresden have developed an alternative to fungicide treatment. "If cereal crops succumb to disease, this is usually due to microscopic fungi and spores present on the outer surface and in the husk of the seeds. Instead of using chemical products to eradicate these spores, we make use of accelerated electrons," says FEP team leader Dr. Olaf Röder. So what happens when the electrons hit the seeds? "It's not unlike cooking. For instance, when you make strawberry jam, the germs are killed by the high temperature - and your jam will keep for years. The electrons destroy the chemical bonds that hold together the molecules in the fungal spores and other pathogens, but without generating heat. You might say that they cause the molecules to explode," explains Röder.

The plant developed by the researchers exposes the seed to electrons as it falls through the treatment zone. It is capable of treating 30 metric tons of seeds per hour - or disinfecting the entire surface of around 200,000 individual seeds per second. But the greatest challenge is not the speed of the process: "Plant seeds are living organisms. If we damage the plant embryo, the seed will not germinate. We therefore have to dose the energy of the electrons very precisely, to ensure that they penetrate no further than the outer layers of the seed," says Röder.

The researchers are disinfecting around 5,000 metric tons of seeds per year in collaboration with seed growers Schmidt-Seeger-GmbH. "Our method has been approved for use in conventional arable farming, and is even recommended for use in organic farming. We are planning to set up a spin-off company to take over and expand these production activities," reports Röder. At the Parts2Clean fair from October 28 to 30 in Stuttgart, the research team will be demonstrating numerous other disinfecting and sterilization technologies for the pharmaceutical and medical engineering industries, in addition to the e-ventus technology for seeds described above (Hall 7, Stand H 802 / I 903).

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This release is available in [German](#).

Source: Dr. Olaf Röder  
[Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft](#)

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## UPDATE 2-Japan chain pulls tainted Chinese beans from shelves

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Wed Oct 15, 2008 10:50am EDT

(Adds China government reaction)

TOKYO, Oct 15 (Reuters) - A Japanese supermarket chain pulled frozen beans produced in China from its shelves on Wednesday after they were found to be tainted with pesticide, the latest in a string of food safety scandals to hit Chinese producers.

China moved quickly to launch an investigation and a food safety official told Japanese diplomats in Beijing that the government was concerned about the possible effect on ties with Tokyo.

At least one woman was briefly hospitalised with vomiting and a numb mouth after eating the green beans imported by Nichirei Foods and sold in Ito-Yokado supermarkets, media reports said.

The Chinese manufacturer of the products, Yantai Beihai Foodstuff Co., told Kyodo news agency it had halted shipments of all its products following the incident.

Tests showed one package of beans contained 34,000 times the permitted level of dichlorvos, a highly toxic insecticide, Japan's Health Ministry said.

The food scare emerged a month after a scandal over Chinese milk tainted with the industrial chemical melamine, which killed four babies in China, made tens of thousands ill and forced product recalls around the world, including in Japan.

A senior Chinese food safety official told diplomats at Japan's embassy in Beijing that China was investigating the incident and had already determined that dichlorvos was not used in the cultivation of the beans or in the processing plant.

The official added that the batch of beans had passed all safety tests at Chinese customs, the Japanese foreign ministry said in a statement.

Earlier this year, several Japanese were made ill by Chinese-made dumplings that also contained insecticide, but a joint investigation has so far failed to reveal how the contamination occurred.

"For more than a year, products made in China have caused damage in various places," Prime Minister Taro Aso told reporters, referring to a previous scandal over Chinese pet food in the United States.

He added that mistrust over food would not be good for either country.

Ito-Yokado apologised for the incident and urged customers not to eat the tainted beans, but to return them to stores.

In a separate incident, toluene, a solvent, was found in Chinese-produced sweet beans that made a woman living north of Tokyo slightly ill, Kyodo news agency said on Wednesday. (Reporting by Isabel Reynolds; Editing by David Fox)

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# [Beyond Pesticides Daily News Blog](#)

## [Study Links Genetically Engineered Corn to Infertility](#)

**(Beyond Pesticides, December 5, 2009)** On November 10, 2008, the Austrian government released a report of long term research showing genetically engineered (GE) corn fed to mice significantly reduced their fertility over three to four breeding cycles within one generation. Similar effects were found in mice fed GE corn and bred over four generations.

The study, "[Biological effects of transgenic maize NK603xMON810 fed in long term reproduction studies in mice](#)," was sponsored by the Austrian Ministry of Health, Families, and Youth, and led by Dr. Jürgen Zentek, Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Vienna.

Three series of experiments were done. The first was a multigeneration feeding trial in which the mice were fed and bred for four successive generations, beginning with the parents that were fed the diets from birth. The second was a multi-cycle breeding trial lasting 20 weeks in which breeding pairs of mice were fed beginning one week prior to co-habitation until the end of experiment, and allowed to go through four breeding cycles in the same generation. The third was a life-term trial involving feeding the mice without breeding from conception (via the pregnant mothers) to their eventual death.

The researchers report that it was not possible to obtain a GE test crop plus parental line from the agro-business companies, which was why the test diets consisting of 33 percent GE corn had to be compared with a non-GE corn variety (also at 33 percent) that was closely related to the GE corn. Both were grown under identical conditions. The GE corn was the transgene hybrid NK603 x MON810 containing three gene cassettes, two conveying glyphosate herbicide tolerance and one insect resistance coding for endotoxin Cry1Ab. The transgenic protein was estimated to be 0.11-0.24 microgram per gram of fresh grain.

In the multigeneration study, the parental generation was fed since birth with either GE or non-GE corn diet, and four generations were bred. Less pups were born in successive generations in both control and GE-fed mice. But the controls tended to do better than GE fed. The average litter size and weight as well as number of weaned pups were greater in the non-GE corn group, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Over all generations, about twice as many pups were lost in the GE group as compared with the control group (14.59 percent vs. 7.4 percent). More litters with eight or more pups were seen in the control compared with GE group. And a greater number of pups were lost at weaning in the GE fed.

Comparison of organ weights did not indicate direct dietary effects in the multigeneration study, except for the kidneys. Kidney weight of females in the GE-fed group were significantly lower in the F2, F3 and F4 generations than controls; and males in the GE-fed group also had significantly lower kidney weight than controls in the F2 generation

The electron microscope investigations revealed differences in the liver cells indicative of reduced core metabolism in the GE-fed mice. In addition, DNA microarray analyses showed important differences in gene expression between both groups fed non-GE corn and the group fed GE corn.

In the multi-cycle breeding trial, the same differences between GE-fed and controls were evident and reached statistically significant levels in the 3rd and 4th litters. There were clearly fewer and smaller litters in the GE-fed mice.

The average number of pups born was always lower in the GE fed but did not reach statistical significance before the 3rd and 4th deliveries. The number of pups at weaning was also always smaller in the GE-fed group. Over all the deliveries, more pups were born in the controls than in the GE group (1035 vs. 844).

Consistent with these findings, the life-term feeding trial showed no significant differences in the average life-span of the GE-fed mice compared with controls.

“This meticulous study suggests that a popular type of genetically engineered corn may harbor fertility-reducing substances,” said Bill Freese, Science Policy Analyst at the Center for Food Safety and co-author of a peer-reviewed study on GE crop regulation. “It’s no surprise to us that U.S. regulators did not catch this. None of our regulatory agencies require any long-term animal feeding trials before allowing genetically engineered crops on the market.”

The Center notes that the GE corn used in the study (NK603 x MON810) was developed by the Monsanto Company, and is sold under the brand names YieldGard (Plus)/Roundup Ready. Monsanto's figures show that U.S. plantings of this GE corn have exploded in recent years, from just 2.2 million acres in 2002 to 38.2 million acres in 2008[2]. The corn is a so-called "stacked" variety with two traits: the Roundup Ready trait allows the corn to survive direct spraying with Roundup herbicide, while a built-in insecticide kills certain above-ground insect pests.

The Center further notes that U.S. regulators allow biotech companies to cross GE crops at will to develop "stacked" crops with virtually any combination of traits without any regulatory oversight, despite expert warnings that stacked crops may pose special risks.

"This study should serve as a wake-up call to governments around the world that genetically engineered foods could cause long-term health damage," said Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director of the Center for Food Safety. "The Center calls upon national and international authorities to place a moratorium on the distribution of GE products for human consumption unless or until their safety can be undeniably established."

"We hope this study will finally persuade the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to completely overhaul its 'rubber-stamp' regulatory process," added Mr. Freese. "The FDA must stop letting biotech companies self-certify their GE crops as safe, and instead establish strict, mandatory testing requirements, including long-term animal feeding trials, for every GE crop," he added.

For more information on GE crops, see Beyond Pesticides [Genetic Engineering program page](#)

Sources: [Institute of Science in Society](#), [Center for Food Safety](#)

## **One Response to "Study Links Genetically Engineered Corn to Infertility"**

*Bob Harrison Says:*

### **No Evidence of Risk of GM Crops**

SAINT LOUIS (November 20, 2008) – On November 11, 2008, the Austrian Ministry of Health, Family and Youth released a report on three studies designed to assess the impact of GM corn on reproduction. One finding in one of the studies was interpreted as a possible impact on reproduction in the test mice. These unpublished studies had not been subjected to peer-review or analysis by independent scientists. At the time the report was released to the press, the author of the study, Dr. Jurgen Zentek, remarked that his team's three studies showed inconsistent results and should be considered preliminary.

Since then, the unpublished study has been reviewed by several scientists, including two internationally recognized experts in reproductive toxicology; Dr. John DeSesso, Senior Fellow at the non-profit group Noblis and Dr. James Lamb, currently of The Weinberg Group. Dr. Lamb developed one type of study used by the Austrian researchers while at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Toxicology Program. Doctors Lamb and DeSesso have both concluded that there are significant flaws in the study reporting and analysis which bring serious question to the validity of the findings. They agreed with Dr. Zentek that the results were inconsistent but concluded that there was no evidence of any adverse effects of the GM crop.

Within 24 hours of the preliminary findings being released, Greenpeace and the Center for Food Safety (CFS) had issued statements calling for a recall and moratorium on GM crops and foods. "Once again, these organizations have demonstrated that their primary interest is sensational headlines and not scientific substance," said Jerry Hjelle, Ph.D., Vice President of Monsanto's Regulatory group. "Every time a preliminary study like this comes out, Greenpeace and the Center for Food Safety cry 'wolf'. And time and time again, scientific scrutiny finds that GM crops and food are safe."

[December 6th, 2008 at 2:49 am](#)



*Where the subject may be perishable  
but the insight isn't.*

## **Welcome To The Age Of Preposterous Reasoning: Defending The Dignity Of Plants**

*Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit, October 17, 2008*

One of the reasons the world is in such terrible shape is that we have lost the capacity as a civilization to make distinctions. We owe a hat tip to Lorri Koster, Co-Chairman, Board of Directors, Vice President, Marketing at Mann Packing, for passing on this incredible piece from *The Wall Street Journal*:

### **SWITZERLAND'S GREEN POWER REVOLUTION: ETHICISTS PONDER PLANTS' RIGHTS**

#### ***Who Is to Say Flora Don't Have Feelings? Figuring Out What Wheat Would Want***

*ZURICH—For years, Swiss scientists have blithely created genetically modified rice, corn and apples. But did they ever stop to consider just how humiliating such experiments may be to plants?*

*That's a question they must now ask. Last spring, this small Alpine nation began mandating that geneticists conduct their research without trampling on a plant's dignity. ...*

*Dr. Keller recently sought government permission to do a field trial of genetically modified wheat that has been bred to resist a fungus. He first had to debate the finer points of plant dignity with university ethicists. Then, in a written application to the government, he tried to explain why the planned trial wouldn't "disturb the vital functions or lifestyle" of the plants. He eventually got the green light.*

*The rule, based on a constitutional amendment, came into being after the Swiss Parliament asked a panel of philosophers, lawyers, geneticists and theologians to establish the meaning of flora's dignity.*

*"We couldn't start laughing and tell the government we're not going to do anything about it," says Markus Schefer, a member of the ethics panel and a professor of law at the University of Basel. "The constitution requires it."*

*In April, the team published a 22-page treatise on "the moral consideration of plants for their own sake." It stated that vegetation has an inherent value and that it is immoral to arbitrarily harm plants by, say, "decapitation of wildflowers at the roadside without rational reason."...*

*Many scientists interpret the dignity rule as applying mainly to field trials like Dr. Keller's, but some worry it may one day apply to lab studies as well. Another gripe: While Switzerland's stern laws defend lab animals and now plants from genetic tweaking, similar protections haven't been granted to snails and drosophila flies, which are commonly used in genetic experiments.*

*It also begs an obvious, if unrelated question: For a carrot, is there a more mortifying fate than being peeled, chopped and dropped into boiling water?*

*"Where does it stop?" asks Yves Poirier, a molecular biologist at the laboratory of plant biotechnology at the University of Lausanne. "Should we now defend the dignity of microbes and viruses?"*

*Seeking clarity, Dr. Poirier recently invited the head of the Swiss ethics panel to his university. In their public discussion, Dr. Poirier said the new rules are flawed because decades of traditional plant breeding had led to widely available sterile fruit, such as seedless grapes. Things took a surreal turn when it was disclosed that some panel members believe plants have feelings, Dr. Poirier says. ...*

### **Crazy Talk?**

*Several years ago, when Christof Sautter, a botanist at Switzerland's Federal Institute of Technology, failed to get permission to do a local field trial on transgenic wheat, he moved the experiment to the U.S. He's too embarrassed to mention the new dignity rule to his American colleagues. "They'll think Swiss people are crazy," he says....*

### **New Constitution**

*In another unusual move, the people of Ecuador last month voted for a new constitution that is the first to recognize ecosystem rights enforceable in a court of law. Thus, the nation's rivers, forests and air are no longer mere property, but right-bearing entities with "the right to exist, persist and...regenerate."*

*Dr. Keller in Zurich has more mundane concerns. ...*

*One morning recently, he stood by a field near Zurich where the three-year trial with transgenic wheat is under way. His observations suggest that the transgenic wheat does well in the wild. Yet Dr. Keller's troubles aren't over.*

*In June, about 35 members of a group opposed to the genetic modification of crops, invaded the test field. Clad in white overalls and masks, they scythed and trampled the plants, causing plenty of damage.*

*"They just cut them," says Dr. Keller, gesturing to wheat stumps left in the field. "Where's the dignity in that?"*

It is easy to make fun of the lunacy here. Yet it is not half as crazy as it is a logical outgrowth of decisions made long ago.

When western civilization became uncomfortable with religion... when it became unwilling to see the world through a traditional Judeo/Christian lens... when it no longer believed that there was such a thing as a soul... it was left to look for alternative explanations.

Initially the argument was that value comes from possessing intellectual abilities that make one a rational being — a person. It was just a small step from this to a belief that profoundly mentally retarded people, for example, have no rights as a person. [Peter Singer](#), a bioethics professor at Princeton, has made the case that killing an infant is nowhere near as serious a moral issue as killing an adult. Singer argues that infants simply lack all the essential characteristics to be deemed "persons" — "rationality, autonomy, and self-consciousness" — and as such "simply killing an infant is never equivalent to killing a person."

Even this claim, though, is a thin reed to lean on. After all, on what basis do we exalt cognitive abilities? Why are these traits more important or valued than physical strength? This is the soil in which the animal rights movement grows. When initially passed, our many laws preventing cruelty to animals were not focused on concerns about animal well-being, they were focused on the notion that it is dehumanizing to be cruel to animals, and if we inure ourselves with such cruelty, surely we will be cruel to men next.

The animal rights movement changed this around. Animals now have rights of their own and human beings have no right to transgress them.

Yet, once again, this is not a distinction likely to hold. Why should it matter that one is an animal as opposed to a vegetable? Why is [sentience](#) a morally significant factor? Aren't we just valuing it because we possess it?

So as night follows day we find people thinking as this Swiss law reflects. Not so much because sensible people actually believe that plants have rights, but because these same sophisticated people would feel ridiculous saying that God ordained something else, they would think themselves brutish if they said that humans get to rule because humans can... in effect they have lost the ability to defend their own civilization.

The irony is that these exquisitely sensitive and morally aware people will one day be crushed by barbarians who will care not a whit for these values. There is something profoundly troubling about a culture that so values tolerance that it allows itself to be destroyed by the intolerant.

You can read the report, *The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants: Moral Consideration of Plants for Their Own Sake* right [here](#).

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*Published on Sunday, October 5, 2008 by The Independent/UK*

## **Charles Targets GM Crop Giants in Fiercest Attack Yet**

**In a provocative address to an Indian audience, the Prince echoes Gandhi with a stinging attack on 'commerce without morality'.**

by Geoffrey Lean

It is less than two months since Prince Charles was on the receiving end of a fusillade of scientific, political and commentariat criticism for voicing, yet again, his concerns about GM crops and foods. He was widely accused of "ignorance" and "Luddism"; of being too rich to care about the hungry, and even of trying to increase sales of his own organic produce. It was put about that Gordon Brown was angered by his intervention.

Yet the Prince has responded by stepping up his campaign, making his most anti-GM speech yet, in delivering - by video - the Sir Albert Howard Memorial Lecture to the Indian pressure group Navdanya last Thursday. And he made it clear that he was going to continue. "The reason I keep sticking my 60-year-old head above an increasingly dangerous parapet is not because it is good for my health," he said " but precisely because I believe fundamentally that unless we work with nature, we will fail to restore the equilibrium we need in order to survive on this planet."

True to his word, he plunged straight into the most controversial and emotive of all the debates over GM crops and foods by highlighting the suicides of small farmers. Tens of thousands killed themselves in India after getting into debt. The suicides were occurring long before GM crops were introduced, but campaigners say that the technology has made things worse because the seeds are more expensive and have not increased yields to match.

The biotech industry strongly denies this, but two official reports have suggested that there "could" be a possible link.

Prince Charles expressed no doubts in his lecture, delivered at the invitation of Dr Vandana Shiva, the founder of Navdanya, and one of the leading proponents of the technology's role in the deaths. He spoke of "the truly appalling and tragic rate of small farmer suicides in India, stemming in part from the failure of many GM crop varieties".

Much of the controversy surrounds claims of failures by a Monsanto GM cotton called Bollguard. The GM company says that "farmers in India have found success" with it, and cites a survey in support. Its opponents produce evidence of their own to show the opposite.

But Prince Charles did not stop there. Broadening his offensive, he said that "any GM crop will inevitably contaminate neighbouring fields", making it impossible to maintain the integrity of organic and conventional crops. For the first time in history this would lead to "one man's system of farming effectively destroying the choice of another man's" and "turn the whole issue into a global moral question." He quoted Mahatma Gandhi who condemned "commerce without morality" and "science without humanity". He added: "One must surely ask the question whether - if only from a precautionary point of view - it might be wise to keep some areas of the world free from GM-based agriculture."

The Prince attacked the contention that "GM food is now essential to feed the world", saying that the evidence showed that modified crops' yields were "generally lower than their conventional counterparts". He called them "a wrong turning on the route to feeding the world in a sustainable or durable manner" and "a risky and expensive distraction, diverting attention and resources away from those real, long-term solutions such as crop varieties which respond well to low input systems that, in turn, do not rely on fossil fuels." There was

substantial evidence "to show that a growing world population can be fed most successfully in the long term by agricultural systems that manage the land within environmental limits".

Recent research had shown, he added, that organic farming techniques had increased yields in Brazil by 250 per cent and in Ethiopia were up fivefold, while the world's biggest international agricultural study - headed by Professor Bob Watson, now chief scientist at Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs - had backed organic farming, rather than GM to tackle world hunger.

Kirtana Chandrasekaran of Friends of the Earth said: "Prince Charles is right that GM crops and industrial farming are profiting big businesses, not feeding the world's poorest."

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2008 ESA Annual Meeting, November 16-19, 2008: Ability of bed bug detecting canines to locate live common bed bugs and viable bed bug eggs (*Cimex lectularius*)



## Annual Meeting

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Ability of bed bug detecting canines to locate live common bed bugs and viable bed bug eggs (*Cimex lectularius*)

**Margaret Pfiester**, Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Phil Koehler, Entomology & Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Roberto Pereira, Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

[Audio File](#)

[Recorded presentation](#)

The common bed bug, *Cimex lectularius* L., like other bed bug species, is difficult to visually locate because of its cryptic nature. Detector dogs are useful for locating bed bugs because they use olfaction rather than vision. Dogs were trained to detect the common bed bug (as few as one adult male or female) and viable bed bug eggs (5, collected 5-6 days after feeding) using a modified food and verbal reward system. Their efficacy was tested with bed bugs and viable bed bug eggs placed in vented PVC containers. Dogs were able to discriminate bed bugs from *Camponotus floridanus* Buckley, *Blatella germanica* L., and *Reticulitermes flavipes* Kollar, with a 97.5% positive indication rate (correct indication of bed bugs when present) and 0% false positives (incorrect indication of bed bugs when not present). Dogs were also able to discriminate live bed bugs and viable bed bug eggs from dead bed bugs, cast skins, and feces, with a 95% positive indication rate and a 3% false positive rate on bed bug feces. In a controlled experiment in hotel rooms, dogs were 98% accurate in locating live bed bugs. A pseudoscent prepared from pentane extraction of bed bugs was recognized by trained dogs as bed bug scent (100% indication). The pseudoscent could be used to facilitate detector dog training and quality assurance programs. If trained properly, dogs can be used effectively to locate live bed bugs and viable bed bug eggs.

See more of: [Student Competition for the President's Prize, Section SVPHS3. Structural, Veterinary, and Public Health Systems](#)

See more of: [Student Competition TMP](#)

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## Dog Helps Rid Family of Bed Bugs

Posted By: Kristin Smith ■ 1 month ago

JACKSONVILLE, FL -- After watching a First Coast News story on one woman's **struggle with bed bugs**, Turner Pest Control decided to treat Nicole Fenton's home as a gift -- free of charge.

They say they wanted to help Nicole partly because she's a single mother with no cash to spare.

Nicole has scrubbed, bleached, washed, vacuumed, and all but turned her townhouse upside down trying to get rid of a bed bug infestation.

"I do everything just trying to keep the house clean," said Nicole.

And that's been a daily routine for months.

Enter Abby, a Parson (Jack) Russell Terrier. She's cute as a button, with talent to boot.

In just minutes, this former pound puppy can pinpoint exactly where bed bugs are hiding.

"How accurate is she? Over 90%. Some say 98, some say 96," says George Gill with Turner Pest Control.

Gill has gone through training with Abby to become a certified scent-detecting canine handler.

Because even with all their gear, it's not always enough to detect and eradicate the toughest parasite there is.

"This is going to be an increasing problem for many years. So, hence our newest employee at Turner Pest Control," said Gill.

And if it's that hard for any pest control company, it's nearly impossible for Nicole.

"Forget it. They're just tenacious little bugs," said Gill.

Which is why Nicole is so thankful this Thanksgiving.

"It get's really frustrating. Life is hard, you know, and if you don't have someone, it's really hard. So I'm really thankful," said Nicole.

"We're certainly happy to help," said Gill.

And of course, there's a thank you for Abby.

"I wanted to tell you thank you cause you're looking out for me. You're gonna get those guys out of my house. That'll work. I appreciate it," Nicole told Abby.

Turner Pest Control will be back at Nicole's home with Abby in tow in a couple of weeks to make sure the bed bugs are gone, and if they're not, Turner will re-treat her home.

They have also gifted her with a free year of pest control service, totaling up to about a \$1,000 gift.

Where do bed bugs come from? Experts say hotels, motels, resorts, even airplanes. They say the problem has nothing to do with being dirty, unhygienic, or unclean. Experts say most people who have problems with bed bugs are those who can afford to travel.

Experts say the best way to prevent bringing home the hitchhiking pests, is to take a flashlight with you when you travel and use it to look for the bugs and their bloody remnants in the hotel mattresses, headboards, dressers, behind wall hangings, and wherever else the flat critters can hide. That includes your suitcase when you're ready to go home.

**Click here** for more information on how to detect, prevent, and stop bed bugs.

First Coast News

# Schools risk bedbug problem

Sunday, November 30, 2008 3:25 AM

**BY JENNIFER SMITH RICHARDS**

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Researchers and public-health officials fear that tiny, brown, blood-sucking bedbugs are going to spread through schools.

Bedbugs can easily hitch rides on kids' backpacks and enter new homes, worsening a growing infestation in Franklin County, said Susan C. Jones, an urban entomologist at Ohio State University.

Two Franklin County schools -- one in Whitehall and the other in the South-Western district -- have contacted Franklin County Public Health after bedbug sightings.

Bedbugs can cause sores and itchy, red spots where they feed on humans. And those spots can become infected.

A bedbug problem in schools could be more difficult to treat than head lice, which are notoriously difficult to wipe out, Jones said.

"You know where to look with head lice," she said. "With bedbugs, they can be in the backpacks, easily drop off and get out into other areas. This is the time we need to be talking about it. I don't want to see schools closed down and fumigated."

That happened last year at a school in Kentucky.

Bedbugs have become a problem in schools in Hamilton County, home to Cincinnati. School officials and worried parents have found bedbugs and want to know how to deal with them, said Greg Kesterman, director of the environmental health division for Hamilton County Public Health.

"Anytime with an insect that has the potential to crawl on a person and travel with (people), you're guaranteed that you'll see them showing up in a public facility," he said. "You want to catch the problem before it ever got to a large scale."

The use of harsh pesticides killed the bedbug problem in the U.S. in the 1950s, but many of those chemicals are now banned, and

## Bedbug facts

**Color:** Light reddish-brown, darker just after feeding

**Shape:** Oval, flat, flightless, six legs

**Size:** Adults can be about 1/4 inch

### What to look for

- ▶ Itchy, red welts in the morning that weren't there the night before
- ▶ Dark spotting on mattresses, box springs and bed frames from bedbug fecal matter
- ▶ Spots of blood on sheets and mattresses

### What to do

- ▶ Experts say professional exterminators, with several follow-up visits, might be needed.
- ▶ In schools, try to store students' coats and backpacks separately.



### How to avoid

- ▶ Examine secondhand furniture, and luggage after trips.
- ▶ Check children's backpacks regularly for signs of bugs.

Sources: McClatchy Newspapers, Associated Press, National Pest Management Association, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

bedbugs have returned to the country with international travelers. They've shown up in all kinds of places, including college dorms.

Trying to avert a bedbug epidemic, the Franklin County Board of Health established a central Ohio bedbug task force. Its job is to keep an eye on the bedbug population, discuss how to handle complaints and inform the public.

It will meet Wednesday and plans to talk about what schools can do to keep bedbugs out and how to deal with them when they come in.

"We really would like to see more school districts show some interest and get involved," said Paul Wenning, the task force's facilitator and special-projects coordinator for the Franklin County health department. "We want to come up with workable alternatives that all schools -- public and private -- in the county can use."

The bugs found in Franklin County schools "turned out to be isolated situations, and they were dealt with pretty easily and pretty quickly, but we anticipate that it's going to get a lot more severe," Wenning said.

"Part of the problem is that until the last four or five months, we had no idea how extensive the bedbug problem was getting in the Columbus area."

But it is extensive, he said: Bugs also have been found in a Head Start center, three hotels and at least six apartment complexes.

School nurses in the Columbus schools are prepared to look out for bedbugs and counsel students or families when they're found, spokesman Jeff Warner said. Although there's no plan yet for dealing with a widespread problem, Warner said the district is willing to work with the bedbug task force's recommendations.

Wenning said one simple fix when a bedbug is spotted is to seal the backpack or coat in a plastic bag. In general, officials don't believe that students should be banned from school if a bedbug is spotted on them or their belongings.

Jones said she trains people statewide to identify and deal with bedbugs, and she hopes that school nurses seek training soon. But she worries that not everyone is on board in the bedbug fight.

Columbus Public Health, for example, hasn't taken a strong stance, she said, because bedbugs don't transmit disease.

"I think they're just asking for trouble," Jones said. "By taking a hands-off approach, they will be drawn into this way too late, when the bedbug problem has exploded."

Jose Rodriguez, spokesman for Columbus Public Health, said the city's development department has a "nuisance team" that can assist residents and landlords.

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Two Franklin County schools have reported sightings. Backpacks can help spread bugs.

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