

letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

It seems to me that we are all uncomfortable with the ever expanding pesticide use on PEI. In most minds, there is at least a nagging realization that we are on a pesticide treadmill and are forced to use more and ever new pesticides yearly to combat growing insect resistance. I imagine that for the thoughtful farmer, farming is not as satisfying as it used to be. He finds himself pouring on more and more costly chemicals for less dollar return. Oh, he can make a nice profit in a good year, but he is worried about rising chemical costs and falling market prices. He may be aware that no matter how carefully applied those tons of chemicals will not limit themselves to merely destroying targeted insect pests, and that therefore they must be building up somewhere. He might be concerned with his own health and his family's, and his neighbours, as, after all, he knows he is using known carcinogens and hormone disrupting agents that damage nervous, immune, reproductive and respiratory systems. The public is also increasingly uncomfortable, wondering about pesticide drift, the state of ground water and build up in foods.

I personally believe that pesticide reduction is possible, and necessary. The government of Ontario and Quebec have led the way by committing to a 50% pesticide reduction on all crops by the year 2002. They are employing an Integrated Pest Management System, which is widely available and uses current technology to achieve this 50% reduction. PEI has yet to achieve any reduction.

For these reasons, I support the Alternatives to Pesticides Committee in their effort to ask Wendy's to stop buying Irving potatoes until Irving commits to a 50% reduction in pesticide use. This is not a boycott, the committee is willing to work with Irving and Wendy's to achieve this target.

I sincerely hope Wendy's and Irving take this opportunity to work towards breaking our overdependence on pesticides.

Hedwig Koleszar

Letter to the Editor

The "Dying for Fries" campaign of the Environmental Coalition of PEI raises the important issue of corporate responsibility. As a customer, if I buy a product from a company that exploits its employees, my purchase is subsidising that exploitation. Similarly, by purchasing a product from a company that damages the environment I am subsidising that damage.

The "Dying for Fries" campaign is focusing upon Wendy's because it is a major purchaser of fries from the Irving owned Cavendish Farms. Some two hundred million pounds of fries are annually supplied to Wendy's restaurant in Atlantic Canada and the United States. The campaign is focusing upon Irving because it is the largest grower, buyer and processor of potato products in the province. As such Irving is the largest user of pesticides and a natural focus for a pesticide reduction campaign.

There is widespread precedent for pesticide reduction targets. The Government of Ontario and Quebec along with four European countries have adopted 50% reduction policies on different timetables. Bio-intensive Integrated Pest Management has strategies that can provide proven, dependable reductions of 50% or greater. IBM programs are currently in place at thousands of farms across the continent. These are proven strategies available today that need to be implemented immediately. The first step is to set a target.

A responsible corporation implements the "best available technologies" throughout its operations. With proven economical strategies widely available there is no excuse for not aggressively implementing them.

Sherilyn Kirkpatrick

*Do something selfish.
Save a whale.*

Or plant a tree. Or recycle your newspaper. After all, whenever you do anything - big or small - to help restore and conserve our wild spaces and species, you also help yourself. We count on these living resources for everything from medical advancement to industrial growth. In other words, what we do for them, we do for ourselves. And our children. Get in touch with us at www.wwfcanada.org or 1-800-26-PANDA and we'll tell you a few more selfish ways you can help.



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