



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Pesticides

Pesticides are defined by Tropical Pesticide Research Institute (TPRI) as “any matter of any description used or intended to be used, either alone or together with other material substances – a) for the control of weeds, pests and diseases in plants, or b) for the control of the external vectors of veterinary or medical disease and external parasites of man or domestic animals or c) for the protection of any food intended for human consumption.”

Although pesticides are important for crop protection, livestock keeping and for controlling disease, they can pose significant occupational health and environmental risks used inappropriately.

More than 80% of the Zambian population live in the rural areas and depend entirely on agriculture and use pesticides to protect crops and livestock.

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

### Problem: Effects of Pesticides

Zambia is witnessing a steady increase in the import and use of different types of pesticides for both agriculture and public health. In 1993, the Environmental Council of Zambia (ECZ) estimated that nearly 300 pesticide types were being used in Zambia in quantities exceeding 1,000 metric tonnes.

The World Bank says Zambia's commercial farming consumption of fertilizer and pesticide utilisation per hectare is higher than that of other African countries. The use of pesticides has become the most common approach to pest control. This has resulted in pest gaining resistance to pesticides, and the destruction of beneficial organisms.

Pesticides contain chemicals, such [chlorpyrifos](#), which can migrate through the ground and be toxic to a number of organisms, including fish and insects.

It is important to understand that most pesticides do kill only their target pests, but they also kill beneficial organisms such as pollinators and pest predators, and pose health risks to wildlife.

Using pesticides also reduces insect populations that are an important food source for birds and other wildlife. The best way to minimize the migration of these toxic chemicals into our natural environment is to reduce or eliminate the use pesticides.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

The use of pesticides must be monitored by small scale and commercial farmers in Zambia.

Use your community radio station to help listeners understand the dangers of pesticides.

Most small scale farmers don't read and understand the scientific language used on pesticide labels.

Ask how many farmers do read the labels and understand the dilution ratios of pesticides before using them.

Check how many dispose the pesticide containers properly and don't use them for food storage and other things.

Ask how many farmers have used organic pesticide from the shops or are using traditional knowledge.

Encourage farmers to explore organic pesticide applications which are degradable.

Ask farmers to identify the sources of the pesticides they use as most of them are not certified by Zambia Environmental Management Authority.

The increased use of pesticides has also caused an increase in the number of pesticide dealers, including fumigators/pest controllers, retailers, and formulators. Unfortunately, the best way of handling pesticides such as pesticides imports, control and management are not strictly followed. This is normally attributed to an inadequate system to regulate imports and a lack of

enforcement of regulations.

A combination of these factors has resulted in illegal pesticides businesses, over-importation or the importation of nearly expired and low quality pesticides.

Eventually, it's the farmers who pay the price of high cost of the ineffective pesticide.

Pesticide residues need to be monitored and require technical support from government extension officers to ensure pesticide quality control checks on their use.

Pesticide residue levels in agricultural produce should be monitored -- especially those known to use large quantities of pesticide that may have adverse effects on human and animal health and the environment.

Advise farmer to treat all pesticides as dangerous substances that can accidentally be consumed by everyone and their animals.

### Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: [makwetiskanu@yahoo.com](mailto:makwetiskanu@yahoo.com)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, National Coordinator, Community-based National Resource Management Forum, Zambia; Email: [vinceziba@yahoo.com](mailto:vinceziba@yahoo.com). Phone: 0966-246-924

Good source of information; Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: [msichilongo@wwfzam.org](mailto:msichilongo@wwfzam.org). Phone: +260 966442540