

Campaigning for reducing pesticide impacts on human health in Ukraine

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Green Doctors Ukraine started 10 years ago with a study on atrazine action on the thyroid (Kornilovskaya, Gerbilsky et al., "Histological studies of atrazine toxicity", Biochemical and Environmental Sciences, 1996, v. 9, p. 60-66) and suggested that inhibiting action of atrazine on the thyroid gland may represent an early step in the mechanism of carcinogenic action of this pesticide. Also it was shown by other members of our NGO that in Ukrainian women, who had spontaneous abortions in previous pregnancies or pathologic births, levels of breast milk pesticides are higher than in women with normal delivery.

According to literature and our own data we created together with teachers of Sofievka high school (situated in an area of large pesticides stores in the Ukraine) an educational curriculum containing "pesticides and health" risk awareness issues. Later, we have introduced these materials into the Ukrainian NEHAP creating a special chapter named „Integrated Medical-Environmental Education in the Ukraine" and into the Ukrainian National Conception of the Environmental Education.

Invaluable help in our educational efforts was given by PAN Germany. In cooperation with PAN Germany, Green Doctors Ukraine published several educational materials and is now preparing a brochure in Ukrainian and English entitled "Pesticides and agro-ecosystems health". The objectives of the brochure are fivefold: (1) preventing "bad practices" for human health regarding pesticides and other agrochemicals; (2) helping to implement the Chemical Safety policy in the Ukraine and other European Countries; (3) gaining support for the government ratification and implementation of international conventions on chemical safety – POPs and PIC Conventions; (4) raising public awareness and establishing East-West collaboration to successfully advocate effective Chemical Safety policies; (5) promoting organic farming and Integrated Pest Management in the Ukraine and other European Countries.