

A Chemical Reaction: The Story Every Parent Needs To Hear

by Iva Keene MRMed. ND. - Saturday, March 06, 2010

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It is with pleasure that I introduce to you *Paul Tukey, the founder of SafeLawns.org and the executive producer of A Chemical Reaction*. Pesticides, as you'll find out, are detrimental to your health, the health of your children and your pets. The far-reaching damage to our health and the health of our ecosystem doesn't stop here. It goes beyond, into our cellular structure, damaging our blueprint - the DNA. Studies are linking infertility (hormonal imbalances, abnormal sperm parameters, PCOS, endometriosis, miscarriages) and birth defects to pesticide exposure via skin contact, air, water and food. This is a truly important issue which only *you* as an individual can help solve by making an educated choice and by teaching those closest to you. Paul will now tell you about the Chemical Reaction - the story you need to hear:

It's March. That means that, by now, you've probably seen the television commercials for pre-emergent crabgrass control. By April, we'll be bombarded with the ads for dandelion control and by early summer we're hear the call to buy the insect controls for our lawns and gardens.

And when we're done buying all those weed killers, insect killers and fungicides — otherwise grouped under the term pesticides — United States homeowners will have applied somewhere in the neighborhood of 80 to 100 million pounds of toxins around our dwellings and businesses. Where our children play. Where our cats and dogs roam.

Many communities are just saying no to this cultural malaise that makes us think we need to apply pesticides to keep up with the lawn Joneses. More than half of Canada has already banned products like weed 'n feed and Roundup due to their impacts on health and the environment. The community of Marblehead, Mass., was the first in the United States to prohibit pesticides from town properties back in 1998. Connecticut stopped applying pesticides around school lawns and playing fields in grades K-8 in 2005 and a few towns in New York have since enacted some form of pesticide legislation. These days New Jersey is taking a national lead — with more than 30 communities having baned pesticides on parks and playing fields.

To the north, however, the state of New Hampshire may be poised to take things a step further. The legislature in that state is considering passage of HB 1456, a bill that would study the effect of a pesticide ban on both public and *private* property. Predictably, the lawn care industry is outraged. Some homeowners are ready to revolt.

“What I do on my own property is none of your damn business!” said one Letter to the Editor of the local newspaper in New Hampshire. “Pesticides are safe when used as directed,” said another.

The legislator who sponsored the bill, Suzanne Smith, said she had no idea how emotional people would get about this issue of dandelions on their lawns. An actual law in New Hampshire will undoubtedly take more than a year to pass through the full House and Senate, but she is undeterred by the naysayers.

“I’m doing this for the children,” she said. “The literature is very clear that pesticides are not safe for children. The packages say Keep Out of the Reach of Children, so how can it be safe to apply these products to the lawns where they play?”

The truth is that it is now illegal to make safety claims about pesticides. The Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged that absolute safety can never be guaranteed where pesticides are concerned. EPA approval of a product is simply a risk-benefit analysis of health and environmental risks weighed against economic benefits. In most cases, those risks and benefits are borne by differing members of society. In other words, the chemical companies and applicators get the money and the homeowners, ponds, lakes, rivers, oceans etc. bear the risks.

While this pesticide debate is sure to rage onward in New Hampshire and elsewhere for years to come, an award-winning documentary movie, *A Chemical Reaction: The Story of a True Green Revolution*, reveals the full drama of the Canadian bans. The film, which had its world premiere at the World Film Festival in Montreal last fall, is currently in the midst of a North America tour titled: “A Chemical Reaction: Launch One in Your Town.” If you’re interested in learning more about the movie or the SafeLawns movement, visit www.SafeLawns.org or www.chemicalreactionmovie.com.

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What are your thoughts? Are you spraying your lawn with pesticides/herbicides? Or are you eating 99% organically grown food? This is a truly important issue with far-reaching effects, I would love to know your views!