Subject: RE: "Sound-Off" Vancouver Sun Newspaper, today
   Date: Sat, 2 Jul 2005 09:40:52 -0700
  From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>
    To: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>
    CC: <fonvca@fonvca.org>

         Friday > July 1 > 2005
Passed on to you at the request of Community Activist Mrs. Monica
Craver.
Green lawns don't justify health hazard .

Robert Cushman, Medical officer of health, Ottawa
Special to the Sun

Friday, July 01, 2005

OTTAWA - No one can discount the contributions pesticides have made in
the modern age, such as reliable crop production and malaria control.

But there is a time and place for everything. How did chemicals
appropriate for agricultural or industrial use suddenly become de
rigueur on residential lawns where children play?

Environmental health is still a young science, and answers to complex
questions are often elusive. However, scores of studies on pesticides --
taken together -- paint a disturbing picture, particularly of childhood
cancers, prostate cancer, Parkinson's disease and fetal death.

New, better-designed research finds that pesticides can cause DNA
damage, and that people with certain genetic makeups are more
susceptible to the hazards of pesticides.

Pesticides seep into our soil, drift into our air, and migrate to our
bodies. They're found in a baby's first bowel movement, in mother's
milk, in body fat. The Centers for Disease Control in the U.S. concluded
that the average person has 13 pesticides in his or her body. Children
are at greater risk because of their small size and large body surface
area, fast metabolism, and because they crawl and put things in their
mouths. Let the precautionary principle guide us.

What we need is better regulation. Canada's Pest Management Regulatory
Agency has failed us. A 2003 auditor-general's report found gross
inadequacies on the part of the federal pesticide agency. And the
revised Pest Control Products Act, which was passed in 2002 and would
modernize the regulation process, still isn't in force. The result of
under-regulation is widespread cosmetic use, because people assume these
products are safe.

This isn't only a health issue, it's also one of good neighbourliness.

I know of a number of people with extreme sensitivities who politely
asked their neighbours to refrain from spraying, only to be ignored.
Condominium boards have cavalierly dismissed anti-pesticide petitions
from concerned residents. In another case, children attending a birthday
party on a windy day were sprayed with pesticide during an application
from the property next door.

Some 70 Canadian jurisdictions already have pesticide-free bylaws in
place, including Halifax, Toronto and Montreal.

Often when a protective law is proposed, the inevitable cries of "nanny
state" are heard. But those who fear government over-regulation haven't
been paying attention.

Drug companies are pulling drugs off the market because they're killing
people. When it comes to human safety, the regulatory framework should

be rigorous, not lax. It's time to start questioning corporate influence
on our poorly resourced regulatory processes. Potential hazards need to
be examined before a product has gone to market, not following an
unforeseen tragedy.

Some environmental problems require complicated solutions. Not so with
pesticides. There are alternatives. Pull dandelions, spread clover. Hire
a lawn-care company that uses organic solutions.

Yes, gardening without pesticides is more labour-intensive. All the more
reason we should support it. It means more physical activity, more local
outfits doing lawn care, more pride in the results.

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