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### **ANNUAL REPORT ON PESTICIDE ILLNESSES RELEASED**

SACRAMENTO --There were 1,332 illnesses in 1994 that had a potential or confirmed link to pesticide use, Cal/EPA's Department of Pesticide Regulation reported today.

All reported pesticide illnesses in the state are investigated, and DPR prepares an annual report on the results. (DPR scientists are still evaluating the 1995 illness reports.)

Of the 1,332 illnesses in 1994, 448 involved agricultural use of pesticides. The remaining 884 occurred in non-agricultural settings. (The term "pesticide" is an umbrella term for substances that kill or control pests. Therefore, pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, disinfectants, and sanitizers.)

Illnesses among agricultural field workers declined in the late 1980s, and this trend continues. From 1982 to 1988, the average number of field worker illnesses was 280 a year. From 1989 through 1994, the annual average was 149. (In 1994, there were 109 field worker illnesses.)

The decline followed regulatory action by DPR against three pesticides which had accounted for a disproportionate share of field worker illnesses. The insecticide phosalone was taken off the U.S. market by its manufacturer after DPR sharply limited its use in California. Also in the late 1980s, after a series of field worker illnesses caused by exposure to methomyl and propargite, DPR mandated longer waiting periods between pesticide application and when workers could reenter treated fields.

The 1,332 illnesses that occurred in 1994 included 514 cases of eye or skin irritation. The other 818 involved symptoms of systemic illnesses. ("Systemic" symptoms include respiratory problems caused by inhaling vapors, and symptoms such as headache or nausea that strike a part of the body not directly exposed to the pesticide.) Overexposure to pesticides caused three deaths. They included two elderly men who swallowed fatal doses of pesticides and one man who broke into his apartment while the building was being fumigated.

Most of the cases reported--1,211 of the 1,332--occurred while people were at work. California law requires that doctors report all illnesses that they suspect of being caused by pesticide exposure, whether work-related or not. However, because most

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physician reports come through the workers' compensation system, most reported illnesses are occupational. As a result, pesticide illnesses outside the workplace are probably under-reported. Nonetheless, the variety of cases reported alerts DPR to pesticide problems and it unlikely that significant hazards escape detection.

Under state law, county agricultural commissioners are the local enforcement agents for pesticide laws and regulations. They investigate all pesticide-related illnesses or injuries reported in their counties, whether they occur in agricultural or non-agricultural settings. DPR specialists analyze the results of the illness investigations to decide if pesticide exposure caused the illnesses.

The U.S. General Accounting Office called the DPR illness surveillance program the nation's "most effective and well-established monitoring system." No other state has a similar reporting and investigative program. It helps DPR evaluate the effectiveness of its pesticide and worker safety programs. DPR uses the information gathered in the illness investigations to determine if it should make changes in how a pesticide is used to provide greater protection from overexposure.

DPR is working with the State Department of Industrial Relations and Cal/EPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to improve illness reporting by physicians and to train physicians on how to better recognize pesticide illnesses.

For a copy of the 55-page report, or the separate 10-page overview, contact DPR's Worker Health and Safety Branch, 1020 N Street, Room 200, Sacramento 95814, phone (916) 445-4222. The report and overview can also be downloaded from the publications section of DPR's Internet Web page ([www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov)).

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A breakdown of illnesses by county is attached.

**1994 Case Reports of Illness and Injury Attributed to Pesticide Exposure  
By County (includes both occupational and non-occupational)**

County	Agricultural <sup>1</sup>					Non-Agricultural					Total Ag & Non-Ag
	Systemic		Irritant		Total Ag	Systemic		Irritant		Total Non-Ag	
	Def/Prob <sup>2</sup>	Pos <sup>2</sup>	Def/Prob	Pos		Def/Prob	Pos	Def/Prob	Pos		
Alameda	0	1	0	0	1	9	2	16	2	29	30
Amador	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Butte	0	1	0	1	2	47	5	4	0	56	58
Calaveras	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Colusa	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	3
Contra Costa	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	6	2	14	15
Del Norte	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2
El Dorado	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Fresno	21	6	22	13	62	11	5	13	4	33	95
Glenn	1	4	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	3	8
Humboldt	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	4	12	12
Imperial	4	15	1	2	22	0	0	0	0	0	22
Kern	4	5	3	7	19	6	3	3	1	13	32
Kings	40	5	11	0	56	2	0	1	0	3	59
Lassen	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Los Angeles	0	2	0	0	2	61	28	36	7	132	134
Madera	1	5	2	0	8	1	0	0	0	1	9
Marin	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
Mariposa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Mendocino	0	0	0	2	2	5	0	3	0	8	10
Merced	2	3	6	5	16	1	1	3	0	5	21
Modoc	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Monterey	4	12	3	5	24	0	3	9	2	14	38
Napa	2	2	2	2	8	2	1	4	0	7	15
Nevada	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3
Orange	0	0	0	0	0	18	12	18	2	50	50
Placer	0	0	0	0	0	35	4	2	1	42	42
Riverside	1	1	0	0	2	17	9	15	3	44	46
Sacramento	1	1	1	0	3	18	13	15	4	50	53
San Benito	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	6	6

County	Agricultural <sup>1</sup>					Non-Agricultural					Total Ag & Non-Ag
	Systemic		Irritant		Total Ag	Systemic		Irritant		Total Non-Ag	
	Def/Prob <sup>2</sup>	Pos <sup>2</sup>	Def/Prob	Pos		Def/Prob	Pos	Def/Prob	Pos		
San Bernardino	0	0	0	0	0	21	16	11	1	49	49
San Diego	16	6	2	5	29	23	11	31	3	68	97
San Francisco	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	9	1	20	20
San Joaquin	2	4	2	5	13	14	4	10	2	30	43
San Luis Obispo	4	3	0	0	7	6	1	5	0	12	19
San Mateo	0	1	0	0	1	4	3	13	1	21	22
Santa Barbara	1	8	1	0	10	1	0	5	0	6	16
Santa Clara	0	6	1	0	7	15	13	17	3	48	55
Santa Cruz	2	1	0	2	5	0	2	3	0	5	10
Shasta	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	5
Sierra	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
Siskiyou	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	3
Solano	0	0	1	0	1	3	2	6	0	11	12
Sonoma	0	3	0	2	5	4	3	5	0	12	17
Stanislaus	17	6	5	6	34	5	2	8	0	15	49
Sutter	1	2	1	0	4	1	1	2	0	4	8
Tehama	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	3
Trinity	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Tulare	3	58	3	21	85	3	1	4	1	9	94
Tuolumne	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2
Ventura	0	1	3	3	7	5	3	7	0	15	22
Yolo	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	6	6
Yuba	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>1332</b>

Source: California Department of Pesticide Regulation

<sup>1</sup> Cases classified as agricultural are those in which people were exposed to pesticides that had been or were being used to contribute to the production of an agricultural commodity.

<sup>2</sup> "Def/Prob" indicates that after evaluation, cases were classified as definitely or probably related to pesticide exposure. "Pos" indicates that after evaluation, cases were classified as possibly related to pesticide exposure.