

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDE REGULATION



Protecting people and the environment

100 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Dear Friends:

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the creation of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation – California’s first statewide, independent agency charged with regulating pesticides to protect human health and environmental quality. Perhaps more notably, 2001 is the 100th anniversary for pesticide law in California.

This year also marks the 120th anniversary of the state’s County Agricultural Commissioners and the 80th year they have worked with the Department to enforce pesticide laws at the local level.

As we enter California’s second century of pesticide regulation, we renew our commitment to effective pest management within the context of vigorous public health and environmental protection. New science and better analytical tools offer tremendous power to identify the presence of chemicals in the environment – even at de minimus levels – as well as the risks they pose. Our challenge – and our mandate – is to manage those risks and assure that Californians enjoy a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

DPR and our commissioner partners are focusing on reducing use of the most toxic pesticides and promoting safer alternatives. From integrated pest management in schools to grants that promote development and dissemination of less-risky pest management strategies, we emphasize biological controls and safer chemicals. We have created a new branch to pursue these approaches.

We are also expanding and accelerating our efforts to assess the human health risks of older pesticides, identify and control pesticides that may be toxic air contaminants, and launch effective measures to reduce pesticide pollution in ground water, lakes and streams. Coupled with stronger enforcement of pesticide laws, these initiatives will take us to the next level of environmental protection.

More fundamentally, DPR has embarked on an effort to re-engineer our way of doing business. We are working with our commissioner partners to be more responsive to the public and the regulated community, provide better information, and do it faster. Our strategy is to use the power of the Internet wherever possible – from licensing pest control advisors, to providing pesticide illness data, to tracking registration status. DPR’s ultimate goal is to match the “24/7” business model that sets the standard for the private sector.

Many exciting changes are under way at DPR, grounded in our charge from Governor Davis to use good science and enforce the law. This progress report summarizes our work in 2000 and describes major projects planned for 2001.



Paul E. Helliker
Director



CONTENTS

Protecting people and the environment	2
Evaluating pesticides, assessing risks	8
Working with nature to reduce risks	10
Delivering services, information online	12
Enforcing pesticide laws	14

THE UNIQUE ROLE OF PESTICIDES

PESTICIDES PLAY A UNIQUE ROLE in environmental protection. Contradicting the usual preventive approach, pesticides are toxic by design and deliberately released into nature. This paradox is explained by the fact that pesticides – when used properly – protect people and their environment from pests – animal, plant or microbial – that threaten human health and the balance of nature. Indeed, nature created the first chemical pesticides, produced by some plants and animals to repel their natural enemies. Over time, people have observed, adapted, and improved upon natural pest management.

Like most human endeavors, the beneficial use of pesticides depends upon information and sound judgment. Scientific knowledge of pesticides continually evolves and improves. California has embraced a scientific approach in developing the strictest and most comprehensive pesticide regulation program in the nation.

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is the state's lead authority for pesticides. DPR has received national and international recognition for its work. While all pesticides must legally receive federal approval before use, DPR requires its own review and registration process to meet higher California standards.

Once a pesticide is approved, DPR and the County Agricultural Commissioners enforce the nation's most stringent pesticide laws. Due to the size and diversity of California agriculture, DPR relies on a close working relationship with the commissioners. They serve as local enforcement agents for state pesticide laws and regulations, and they are integrally involved in many DPR programs. For example, the commissioners issue site-specific permits required before many pesticides can be used, and they conduct inspections of pesticide applications.

In addition to supervising these local enforcement programs, DPR monitors pesticides – from the farm field to the grocery shelf – to assure the safety of workers and consumers. As a final step, DPR continuously re-evaluates its programs, emphasizing risk reduction and, whenever possible, less use of pesticides in favor of more natural pest controls.



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