



For Immediate Release
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Hundreds of Banned, Highly Hazardous Pesticides Allowed in Mexico: New Report Calls for HHP Ban and Agroecological Alternatives

(Göteborg, Sweden) The report [Highly Hazardous Pesticides in Mexico](#) provides comprehensive analysis of the widespread use of highly toxic insecticides, herbicides and fungicides permitted in Mexico for use on food, in homes, gardens and industry. The report reveals 140 active ingredients of pesticides that are banned in other countries but permitted for use in Mexico, 111 of which are classified as highly hazardous pesticides (including known carcinogens carbofuran and diazinon). This practice harms agricultural workers and people living in communities near spray zones, and impacts soils and waterways near sites and downstream, creating billions of dollars in economic burdens. Although many countries have bans on these hazardous substances, people around the world who consume non-organic produce from Mexico are exposed to toxic residues on their food.

Fernando Bejarano, Director of Red de Acción Sobre Plaguicidas y Alternativas en México (RAPAM) and coordinator of the report, led a chemical-by-chemical comparison between the world's most comprehensive listing, the [PAN International List of Highly Hazardous Pesticides](#) (2016 version), and [PAN International Consolidated list of banned pesticides](#) compared this with the listing by the government office COFEPRIS's 2016 Pesticide Catalogue, which contains the all pesticides registered for use in Mexico at the Mexican Ministry of Health. The analysis revealed 111 active ingredients of highly hazardous pesticides approved for use that are banned in other countries are legally for sale in Mexico in thousands of commercial products.

Mexico and the United States allow a meaningful number of harmful pesticides that are banned in the European Union, including the hazardous herbicides atrazine, paraquat, and insecticides as permethrin, terbufos, and thiodicarb. Not only do the US and Mexico trade significant tonnage of pesticides over the border, the US is Mexico's main trade partner for the pesticide intensive agricultural export-oriented crop market.

Failing to curb highly hazardous pesticide use brings a high cost. [UNEP](#) estimates that health costs from pesticide intoxications in Europe are approximately \$15 million with an additional \$3.9 million due to loss of employment. In the United States, annual costs related to pesticide exposure, including public health care, pesticide-caused pest resistance, crop damage, underground water pollution, and bird loss, account for a total cost of \$10 billion US dollars (UNEP, 2013: 30).

A chapter on insecticides and bees, written by specialist, Remy Vandame, PhD, reveals that Mexico authorized 82 active insecticide ingredients associated with bee death, which are present in hundreds of commercial products. This includes the neonicotinoid insecticides banned in Europe, such as imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, and clothianidin.

Hilal Elver, **United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food**, and Baskut Tuncak, **United Nations Special Rapporteur on hazardous substances**, co-authors of the introduction to the English version, say



the report “highlights the need for changes in the regulatory framework and the promotion of emerging agroecological alternatives from peasant communities, including organic farming. It is a very good source to convince other developing countries to phase out dangerous agro-chemicals, achieve healthy food and healthy environments, all the while protecting human rights in agrarian communities and the right to adequate food for all people.”

“Agroecological alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides use is not only better for human and ecological health, but as our success in organic cotton farming in Ethiopia proves, agroecology is economically viable as well,” said IPEN Co-Chair and Director of PAN Ethiopia, Dr. Tadesse Amera. “Cotton is notoriously HHP intensive, but with collaboration of government, philanthropic investment and on-the-ground organizing by farmers themselves, we now have a booming certified organic cotton market created and sustained by over 2,000 small farmers in Ethiopia. The right to produce and consume healthy food free of pesticides and transgenics is a human rights issue that governments must act to guarantee.”

Says Fernando Bejarano, Director of RAPAM and coordinator of the report, "It is necessary to put the health and human dignity of workers, communities and consumers at the center of the pesticides and pest control policies—not the profits and merchandise of powerful companies. This has been a big challenge for the elected government in Mexico."

The [HHPs in Mexico Report](#) was produced by RAPAM and IPEN with support from the government of Sweden.

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[RAPAM](#) is a non-profit civil association that works to progressively eliminate chemical pesticides that affect human health and the environment. It promotes changes in public policies to promote agroecological control of pests, and the protection of the rights to healthy food, free of pesticides and transgenic, and a pollution-free environment.

[IPEN](#) is a global network of more than 500 health and environmental public interest organizations in over 125 countries, working to eliminate the world's most harmful chemicals for a toxic-free future for all.