



Highly Hazardous Pesticides in Chile

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Executive Summary

In Chile, several studies focused on chronic poisoning have noted higher rates of birth defects in seasonal female farmworkers' babies; reproduction problems in those farmworkers (miscarriages, birth defects, etc.); and, later, brain and other neurological problems in children, among other diseases associated with pesticide use.

The annexes found in the full report list pesticides authorized in Chile that are on Pesticide Action Network's (PAN's) list of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs). We identify countries and companies accountable for HHP imports, formulations and sales, and we compare the list of pesticides registered in Chile to the list of pesticides banned in the European Union (EU) and other countries, plus the list of HHPs harmful to bees and pollinators. A special appendix is added for glyphosate.

This data shows that one-quarter of active substances imported and sold in Chile are HHPs, according to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) in Europe, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Additionally, a large number of these pesticides are banned in other countries, but in Chile they are labeled and sold with a green seal, which implies that they are not dangerous.

In sum, Chile authorizes approximately 400 active pesticide substances, yet 102 of them are highly dangerous pesticides due to their acute, chronic and environmental effects, according to other authorities. These represent approximately 25% of the total registered pesticides.

According to the PAN list of HHPs, Chile also allows 29 active substances that may cause cancer in human beings, 26 of them according to the U.S. EPA, and three more on the list of the International Agency of Research on Cancer (IARC). Furthermore, the current pesticide registry in Chile has 28 active ingredients that are not approved by the European Union, and/or are included in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) List of the Rotterdam Convention.

Seventeen pesticides allowed in Chile are classified as endocrine disrupters or possible endocrine disrupters by the European Union's (EU's) GHS system, or meet the criteria of

Class 2 carcinogens belonging to the GHS. In addition, there are 11 pesticides classified as having reproductive toxicity, according to the EU's GHS.

Regulatory actors in the realms of human health and agriculture hope that pesticides fulfill the goals under which they were registered, having positive effects on both plant and human health. But in fact, the nature of many pesticides is such that they put peasants' and indigenous people's lives at risk, creating severe hazards to both human and animal health. Teratogenic effects, cancer and imprinting establish that those hazards remain present for decades after pesticide use.

Highly hazardous pesticides' use in Chile threatens human rights, and it especially violates children's and women's human rights to life, health, environmental and working conditions protections, among other human rights. This research quotes the three Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations on human rights to food, on chemical substances and waste, and to environment.

This report also establishes the persistence of severe problems denounced by affected communities, such as:

- the illegal traffic and sale of obsolete and banned pesticides;
- troubles related to the final disposal of obsolete pesticides, pesticide waste and empty containers;
- the poisoning of superficial and underground water sources;
- deaths, and high underreporting acute poisoning; and,
- the failure of enforcement, along with lax regulations for carcinogenic and endocrine disruptor pesticide residues in food, and conflicts of private-public interest in regulators

Going forward, farmworkers' exposure to pesticides in Chile must be considered and monitored as a violation of human rights that has not been handled properly. Media reports and scientific research quoted here describe repeated incidents in which pesticides have negatively affected the health and environment of rural schoolchildren, peasants and seasonal women farmworkers.

Finally, this report details possible alternative organic and agroecological experiences. We provide a set of recommendations focused on banning highly hazardous pesticides, and shining a spotlight on the existing gaps in the national regulatory process.

