



# Country Situation Report on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) in Argentina

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The expansion of monocultures that has been occurring in all agricultural regions of the planet inevitably has led, given its unsustainability, to an expansion in the use of pesticides, especially those defined as highly hazardous (HHP for its acronym in English). HHPs present high levels of acute or chronic danger to people's health or to the environment, according to internationally accepted classification systems -- such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals adopted by the United Nations in 2003—or if they are included in relevant, binding international agreements (Stockholm Convention, Rotterdam Convention, and Montreal Protocol). Also, pesticides that may cause serious or irreversible damage to health or the environment, based on how they are used in a given country, may be considered and treated as highly hazardous. We propose additional criteria to define HHPs, based on guidelines from the Pesticide Action Network International (PAN International), including: if the toxicity is fatal or irremediable when it is inhaled, if it is endocrine system disruptive, or if it is bioaccumulative, meaning that it's very persistent in water, soil or sediments, and very toxic to aquatic organisms and to bees.

In this paper we analyze the HHPs used in Argentina. We compare the List of Highly Hazardous Pesticides made by PAN international<sup>1</sup> with the pesticides present in Argentina, including an analysis of the crops on which they are used. Most HHPs are used in activities such as fruit growing and horticulture, which implies a great deal of exposure not only for producers and workers, but also consumers. The document also examines registration of pesticides in Argentina, emphasizing that pesticides are categorized only by their acute toxicity, with only a low level of recategorization and revalidation of pesticides based on the advances in scientific investigations and determinations established in other countries.

Comparing the lists of pesticides registered and used in Argentina with the international list from PAN, it is possible to affirm that of the 433 active ingredients registered in Argentina, 126 of them, or 29%, are included in the PAN list. If we analyze the PAN HHP list - which includes 299 pesticides - 126 of them, or 42%, are commercialized in

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<sup>1</sup> List of Highly Hazardous Pesticides made by PAN International in March 2018, translated into Spanish by Graciela Carbonetto and updated by Lucia Sepúlveda and Maria Elena Rozas. <https://rap-al.org/>

Argentina. Of these 126 products, three of them are used industrially: chromated copper borate, chromated copper arsenate, and creosote oil. The other 123 are used in intensive agricultural activities, in extensive farming, urban pests, gardening and vector control health campaigns. These products are sold under different trade names in which the concentration of the active ingredient, the form of presentation and the manufacturing company varies. Of the 123 HHPs sold in Argentina that are used in agricultural activities, 51 (41.4%) are insecticide or acaricide products, 10 (8.1%) are only used as acaricides, 27 (21.9%) are used as herbicides, 20 (16.2%) as fungicides, 5 (4%) as biocides, 2 (1.6%) as plant growth regulators, 2 (1.6%) as nematicides, 3 (2.4%) as rodenticides, and 3 (2.4%) as cure seeds.

We also analyzed the struggles in several communities in Argentina to make visible the expansion in the use of pesticides, the exposure to said toxics, and the consequences on individual and community health, especially the development of chronic diseases. Access to more toxicological information and increasing awareness is enriching community response to this problem.

This document ends with an analysis of agroecology not only as a technological proposal, but as a civilizing paradigm, with the objective of generating sustainable relationships between human beings and the environment. We describe and comment on diverse initiatives carried out in different regions of Argentina, in both intensive and extensive farming. In doing so, we demonstrate that it is both sustainable from the environmental point of view, and viable from the economic point of view, not only to replace highly hazardous pesticides but to contribute to the creation of a more just, free and healthy society. From the analysis of the cases presented, we affirm that, from the agroecology point of view, it is possible to produce food in a sustainable way, with adequately productive economic yields, contributing to the empowerment of the communities and the attainment of food sovereignty.

In accord with the PAN and its partner organization in Latin America, RAP-AL, we recommend urgent action to protect society and public health and to promote the development of sustainable production systems. Regulations and actions should be part of a national program for the reduction and prohibition of highly hazardous pesticides in the country, and be integrated into the national Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) implementation plan. We should begin by prohibiting banned HHPs, as well as those with restricted use in other countries, as in most cases such initiatives are based on scientific research and epidemiological monitoring that correspond with criteria of preserving human and environmental health. We also recommend establishing a system for the registration and categorization of pesticides with the participation of the National Department of Health, in which the eco-toxicological evaluation is carried out in public laboratories with external monitoring. We further urge Argentina to improve toxicological training of health professionals in hospital centers so they can detect and carry out adequate treatment and monitoring of acute and chronic poisonings caused by highly hazardous pesticides.

Finally, we recommend the preparation of plans at the national level, with the participation of civil society, to fulfill the country's commitments to the agreements reached in international conventions and laid out in the SAICM plan. The strategic plans and projects on agricultural production must be harmonized with supervision of the use of pesticides and concerns about their effects on health. By implementing these proposed actions, Argentina will be able to contribute to the 2020 goals of SAICM and to the fulfillment of several goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda, promulgated by the United

Nations, such as: promoting sustainable agriculture (objective 2), healthy lives and welfare (objective 3), sustainable water management (objective 6), decent work (objective 8), the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, and the cessation of biodiversity loss (objective 15).