

Beyond Pesticides

2009 Annual Report Summary

First Lady Michelle Obama struck a hopeful chord in 2009 when she planted a White House organic vegetable garden. With that act, she sent a strong health and environmental message to the nation and world --affirming this crucial and historic time for Beyond Pesticides' work. Our appointment to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), made by the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, puts us in a key position to help lead on organics as a response to serious health, environmental and worker protection problems. In addition, we are poised to bring a critical 'green alternatives' perspective to toxic chemicals policy reform. This annual report summary highlights Beyond Pesticides' major projects.

Children's Health: Protecting the most vulnerable

Because of their vulnerability to toxic chemical exposure, children are an important focus for Beyond Pesticides' work to advance policy and practices to stop toxic pesticide use and promote green alternatives. With the introduction of the *School Environment Protection Act of 2009* (SEPA), H.R. 4159, members of Congress and health

and environmental groups are saying that it is time to stop the unnecessary use of dangerous pesticides in schools. SEPA is a defined Integrated Pest Management (IPM) bill that requires organic landscaping and preventive management practices to keep insects and rodents out of buildings through sanitation and exclusion techniques. It allows as a last resort least-toxic pesticide use, defined in the bill as those not linked to a list of adverse effects. Supporting the need for this type of national legislation, Beyond Pesticides released its fourth edition of the landmark report, *Schooling of State Pesticide Laws*, documenting the fact that protection from toxic pesticide use in schools under state laws is uneven across the country and children in 15 states are provided no protection at all.

Ban Triclosan: Ensuring safe consumer products, protective of the environment

Triclosan, an antibacterial chemical linked to a range of adverse health and environmental effects, is an ingredient in hundreds of products on store shelves around the country --from hand soap and toothpastes, to toys and textiles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has detected triclosan in 75% of the U.S. population. In addition to being linked to endocrine disruption and skin irritation, products containing triclosan may also contribute to antibiotic resistance and, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are no more effective than regular soap and water. In July 2009, Beyond Pesticides and others submitted a petition, updating an earlier 2005 petition to FDA, maintaining that the agency has a duty to ban the use of the controversial antibacterial agent triclosan for non-medical applications. The petition cites scientific evidence suggesting that triclosan poses imminent threats to human health and the environment.

Lawns and Landscapes: Creating healthy outdoor spaces

During a typical year in neighborhoods across the country, over 102 million pounds of toxic pesticides are applied in pursuit of a perfect lawn and garden. Beyond Pesticides knows that beautiful yards, parks or other landscapes are possible with organic methods and works at the state and community level to support policies that end lawn pesticide use in parks and community spaces. The New York State Office of Parks and Historic Sites adopted the most protective policy in the nation, with the goal of eliminating pesticide use. This grew out of Beyond Pesticides' report *Ending Toxic Dependency* and a request with 25 state groups that resulted in the Governor of New York adopting an executive order to curtail pesticide use on state lands.



Organic Integrity: For consumers, workers & the environment

Beyond Pesticides supports organic agriculture as effecting good land stewardship and a reduction in hazardous chemical exposures for workers on the farm and 2009 was an exciting year for work on organics. In September, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides executive director, to a five-year position as an environmental representative on the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). The Board regulates practices and materials allowed in organic production and advises the Secretary on other aspects of the implementation of the *Organic Foods Production Act*.

Organic food, specifically its benefit to consumers, rural communities, farmers, farmworkers and the environment, was the theme of *Bridge to an Organic Future: Opportunities for health and the environment*, the 27th National Pesticide Forum, April 3-4, 2009 in Carrboro, NC. The centerpiece of the program was the panel, "Growing a Fair, Local, Organic Food System," which featured Neill Lindley (pictured with his wife Cori on the right), a farmer who told his story about converting from a chemical-intensive to an organic dairy operation.



Health Care Facilities: Creating toxic-free places of healing

Using our pilot project with the Maryland Pesticide Network (MPN) as a model, Beyond Pesticides is working to effect the adoption of practices and policies in health care facility management that stops toxic pesticide use. Because hospital and elder care patients are already vulnerable, it is imperative that they not be exposed to chemicals linked to cancer, nervous and immune system damage and respiratory illness. As of 2009, we had 13 health care facilities participating in the project. Many of the health care facilities have come to utilize the Beyond Pesticides and MPN staff as partners or advisors in formulating approaches to pest management. We conduct facility walk-throughs and issue reports, which serve as a tool for us to both point out management issues that lead to pest problems, but more broadly educate facility staff. As part of our work with Baltimore hospitals, we have also been working to educate the surrounding underserved communities about the hazards of pesticides and safer pest management.

Transforming Pesticide Policy: To protect health and the environment

Beyond Pesticides, with the support of over 100 grassroots organizations and university researchers and in collaboration with Pesticide Action Network North America, sent a policy document, *Transforming Government's Approach to Regulating Pesticides – to protect health and the environment*, to President Obama. The document addresses pending decisions and petitions before federal agencies responsible for regulating toxic chemicals and alternatives. Beyond Pesticides was invited to meet with EPA Office of Pesticide Programs Director Debra Edwards and EPA Assistant Administrator Stephen Owens. Beyond Pesticides organized an agenda and brought together in person and by phone representatives of organizations that signed the document. The Beyond Pesticides Board of Directors and staff have also met with officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service to discuss opportunities for the Administration to adopt more protective pesticide policies.



Public Education: Pesticides and Alternatives

The Center for Pesticides and Alternatives Information affords Beyond Pesticides the opportunity to play a unique role in operating an outreach and education program on key issues, with a dedicated staff person providing support to grassroots activists and others by phone, online, and in person at conferences and community events. We host an annual conference, the National Pesticide Forum, and publish our quarterly magazine, *Pesticides and You*. Beyond pesticides operates an information-rich website featuring campaign materials, action alerts, scientific studies, factsheets, model policies, *Pesticide Gateway*, *Videos for Change* and the *Daily News Blog*. You can also stay in touch with us via Facebook (www.facebook.com/beyondpesticides) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/bpncamp).