



Pesticide Action Network  
Advancing alternatives to pesticides worldwide

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## Ontario bans 2,4-D; Deadly pesticide cocktails; Saudis ban 23 pesticides; more...

### Pesticide Action Network Updates Service (PANUPS)

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A Weekly News Update on Pesticides, Health and Alternatives  
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#### March 05, 2009

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### Ontario bans 2,4-D for landscape use



According to the *Canadian Press*, on March 4 the Ontario government confirmed sweeping new regulations banning 85 pesticides for lawn and landscape applications. "Environment Minister John Gerretsen says the new regulations will prohibit the sale and use of 2,4-D in its concentrated form, despite a NAFTA challenge from its manufacturer" last August by Dow AgroSciences. Gideon Forman of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment told the *Toronto Star* the 85 pesticides are "found in roughly 250 products" used for cosmetic purposes. The ban -- the latest step in the provincial Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, passed last June -- is slated to take effect on Earth Day, April 22. Retailers will be immediately required to store and display pesticides behind the counter, and by 2011 they will have to notify customers of the new limitations on use. Despite industry resistance to the ban, many landscapers are already switching to organic and least-toxic alternatives. Still, some health professionals and activists feel that the ban doesn't go far enough, as it does not stop owners of golf courses, farms or managed forests from spraying pesticides. Dow's announcement that it might file a \$2 million **suit** against the federal government under NAFTA to preserve 2,4-D has not dissuaded Canadian local and provincial governments from expanding

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safety of Ontario residents just because there's a threat of a potential lawsuit." In December in the U.S., Beyond Pesticides and NRDC filed a **petition** with the EPA to cancel registration of 2,4-D, the herbicide that was one of two Dow chemicals in Agent Orange and is found in popular "weed and feed" products across North America.

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## Pesticide cocktail more deadly to fish

A new study has found that combinations of common agricultural pesticides are deadlier to salmon than traditional risk assessment models predict. The research by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service and Washington State University examined five pesticides: diazinon, malathion, chlorpyrifos, carbaryl and carbofuran, all of which inhibit an enzyme critical to the proper functioning of the nervous system. While prevailing models predict that the harmful effects of these pesticides should add up as they accumulated in the water, the researchers were surprised to find that certain pesticides acted synergistically, resulting in mixtures that were more harmful than simply the sum of the individual pesticides, the *Seattle Times* reports. "We need to design new research that takes into effect the real-world situation where pesticides almost always coincide with other pesticides," co-author Nathaniel Scholz, a research zoologist at the NOAA Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center, said from Seattle. The **study** published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* concluded that the current practice of testing pesticides one at a time in order to determine aquatic toxicity fails to show the true risks, especially for fish protected by the Endangered Species Act. In a 2008 study, NOAA Fisheries issued findings under the Endangered Species Act that diazinon, malathion and chlorpyrifos jeopardize the survival of all 28 species of Pacific salmon listed as threatened or endangered in the West.

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## Pyrethroids contaminate urban creeks in California



In January, California's Pesticide Registration and Evaluation Committee heard from Donald Weston, an ecologist at U.C. Berkeley. Weston **presented research** showing the presence of **pyrethroid** insecticides in the rain water run-off from several residential neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Central Valley. Pyrethroids are synthetic insecticides developed to mimic naturally-occurring pyrethrins. The majority of water samples from each site contained pyrethroid residues in concentrations high enough to be toxic to *Hyalella azteca*, a small shrimp-like organism that lives in fresh water ecosystems. *H. azteca* is commonly used for aquatic ecotoxicity testing. The source of the pyrethroid contamination is most likely home and garden use and structural pest control, as the creeks that were sampled drained urban rather than agricultural areas. "Non-agricultural use of pyrethroids has been steadily rising in California and across the U.S. for the last 15 years," observes Pesticide Action Network chemist Karl Tupper. "While they have been touted as less toxic to mammals than some of the acutely hazardous pesticides they've replaced, this research adds to evidence that pyrethroids may pose a variety of unanticipated risks." Studies have suggested that many pyrethroids are endocrine disruptors, and some are ranked by the EPA as probable human carcinogens.

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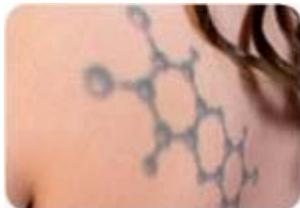
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## Saudi Arabia bans 23 pesticides

In response to the fatal poisoning of two Danish children last week, "the latest in a series of deaths attributed to improper use of pesticides," the Saudi government announced that a number of pesticides will be immediately and completely banned from the Saudi Arabian market, according to the *Arab News*. The list of 23 pesticides possibly being sold in the Kingdom include **aluminum phosphide**, the fumigant suspected to have caused the death of the children. The chemical is acutely toxic, one of the Pesticide Action Network "Bad Actors" -- pesticides listed as highly hazardous by regulatory agencies. A source close to the vacationing family said that a fumigant pesticide had been used in an adjoining housing unit - a kind that is often left in plates and turns into a gas when exposed to air. The new strict use regulations were announced because there are alternatives available and the pesticides are highly toxic, said Khaled Al-Fohaid, director general of media relations at the Ministry of Agriculture. But Hamoud Al-Ahmadi, the manager of a local pest extermination company, told the press "that despite the crackdown some companies would continue to flaunt the regulations and use the banned chemicals." Another pesticide salesperson described an active black market for pesticides. Included among the chemicals to be banned are: bromadiolone, carbofuran (in liquid form), chlorpyrifos, ethoprophos, carbaryl, chlorothalonil, demeton-s-methyl, diclofop- methyl, dicofol, dimethoate, benomyl, mancozeb, tetradifon, zineb, methomyl, propargite, propoxur, quintozene, simazine, methiocarb, methoxychlor and oxydemethel-methyl.

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## U.S. chemical policy finally under review



Last week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee's subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, chaired by Rush (D-IL), convened a hearing to focus on the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). According to a **Greenwire** report, both industry and environmental interests agree that the 32-year old law needs updating. There is tremendous disagreement, however, on just how broken U.S. chemical policy is, and what should be done to fix it. Richard Denison, a senior scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund, calls for a "top to bottom overhaul" of the law, moving toward a system that "rewards innovation toward safer chemicals and products." Meanwhile Cal Dooley, CEO of the American Chemistry Council, told Greenwire reporters that TSCA is not broken, but admits that it "is in dire need of modernization." TSCA governs nearly 83,000 chemicals in commerce, many of which have not been tested to determine whether they cause human health effects. Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry Waxman, who recently introduced legislation requiring health and safety disclosures for chemicals used in products such as baby bottles, called the hearing "long overdue."

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## Orange oil study questioned

Entomologist Richard Fagerlund -- a.k.a. "The Bugman" -- writes a popular column on least toxic methods of pest control. "One of the most common questions I get from California is about the difference between using orange oil or fumigating with **sulfuryl fluoride** (Vikane) for controlling drywood termites or wood-boring beetles." Vikane, made by Dow AgroSciences, is the leading structural fumigant and an acutely

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hazardous pesticide. **Fagerlund was moved to review** the issue anew because of a widely publicized study from the University of California claiming a disappointing 77% termite kill rate with the leading orange oil brand, "XT-2000". He questions the study because Dow has begun funding UC research on "sustainability," and he finds issues with Dow's "**technical release**" (**PDF**) of the UC results, including the quality of product used, how it was applied, and even whether the company that distributes the oil actually supplied the material for testing. Photographs attached to the study clearly show a Clark's Pest Control technician applying XT-2000. Clark's actively promotes fumigation with Vikane for termites. Fagerlund points out that the wood being treated with orange oil is full of fissures which would allow the orange oil to be lost in the cracks and not be fully absorbed, explaining the termite survival rate. "This is akin to draping a structure in a ripped tent, then pumping in 10 lbs. of Vikane. How could you evaluate the kill rate with a hole in the tent?," he concluded.

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