



## Did you know?

... that the **FAO Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides** calls on the **Food Industry** to play a proactive role in the implementation of the Code?





## Good-looking food

is attractive for farmers, for food retailers and consumers – and for pests!

As pests, diseases and weeds can take quite a large share of our food there is no doubt that farmers need effective ways to protect their crops. Pesticides are the most widely used for this purpose, although there are also proven non-chemical methods of pest management available.

Reliance on hazardous pesticides leads to serious, continuing problems the world over. Pesticide poisonings and long-term harm to human health, wildlife and the environment are now recognized, as well as economic and social disadvantages. This is especially the case in developing countries, but also occurs in industrialised countries. The problems reach beyond those applying pesticides, to affect farming communities and consumers. Food retail and processing companies are increasingly confronted with consumer and public demands for clean food and safer pest management in their supply chains.





## The FAO Code of Conduct

makes an important contribution putting less hazardous pest management into practice.

In 1985 governments, meeting at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) first adopted an *International **Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides***. The Code guides national government laws and it calls on all stakeholders, from governments via pesticide industry and farmers to public interest groups, to use it and monitor its implementation.

A revised Code of Conduct was adopted in 2002 by the 187 FAO member countries as ***the globally accepted minimum standard for pesticide management***. The new version now also calls for the first time on the food industry to become active implementers of the Code.

**We invite you to join the initiatives to implement the Code of Conduct in your business.**





## Good reasons

for implementing the Code deal with the whole life cycle of food. According to the Code of Conduct “there are still major weaknesses in certain aspects of pesticide management, predominantly in developing countries. For instance, national pesticide legislation is not widely enforced due to lack of technical expertise and resources; highly hazardous or substandard pesticide formulations are still widely sold; and end-users are often insufficiently trained and protected to ensure that pesticides can be handled with minimum risk.” But also in the industrialised countries there are still major problems caused by pesticides, including worker safety and contamination of food and water.

Agriculture is among the world’s most hazardous industries and pesticides account for 14% of occupational injuries and 10% of known fatalities. Highly toxic pesticides have immediate adverse effects on human health, wildlife, local food sources such as cattle or fish, beneficial insects and biodiversity. Less observable impacts emerge over time. Chronic effects include cancers, reproductive problems, birth defects, hormonal disruption and damage to the immune system. Residues in food are still on a high level and there is increasing scientific concern over low level consumption of pesticide residues.





## The Food industry

is one of the most important actors in food supply chains. As an increasing part of the food consumed worldwide is processed and distributed by companies the food industry is a powerful force in shaping food production, trade patterns and food consumption. This is why the new version of the FAO Code of Conduct now also calls on the entire food industry to play its part in its implementation.

Contributing actively to the Code's implementation will deliver a range of benefits:

- ✓ Reduce human and environmental exposure to pesticides
- ✓ Cut back on unnecessary and costly pesticide applications
- ✓ Improve food quality and sustainability of production
- ✓ Improve consumers' trust in food

It also helps companies respond to concerns of consumers in the North and public interest groups in the global South and demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility. By putting the Code into practice, a company selling food shows that it cares about its responsibility along the food chain and supports farmers to move to safer pest management.







## Obligations for food companies

The FAO Code of Conduct for pesticides sets standards to “promote practices which **reduce risks** in the handling of pesticides, including **minimizing adverse effects on humans and the environment** and **preventing accidental poisoning** resulting from improper handling”. (Article 1.7.3)

“Food industry (...) should play a proactive role in the development and promotion of **Integrated Pest Management**” (Article 3.8)

All parties should “support the process of information exchange and **facilitate access to information regarding pesticide residues in food** and related regulatory actions” (Article 9.4.1)

“The Code should be brought to the attention of all concerned in the regulation, manufacture, distribution and use of pesticides, so that governments, individually or in regional groupings, pesticide industry, international institutions, pesticide user organizations, agricultural commodity industries and **food industry groups (such as supermarkets) that are in a position to influence good agricultural practices, understand their shared responsibilities in working together** to ensure that the objectives of the Code are achieved”. (Article 12.2 )





# The Pesticide Action Network

was founded in 1982. It is a global coalition of over 600 non-governmental organisations and individuals in over 60 countries working together to oppose the misuse of pesticides and to promote sustainable agriculture and ecologically sound pest management. PAN Germany was established in 1984 as part of the global network and has been continually involved in initiatives to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and to promote sustainable alternatives on national, European and global levels.



Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Germany  
Nernstweg 32, 22765 Hamburg, Germany  
Phone: +49 (0)40 – 399 19 10-0  
Fax: +49 (0)40 – 390 75 20  
Email: [info@pan-germany.org](mailto:info@pan-germany.org)

[www.pan-germany.org](http://www.pan-germany.org)  
[www.fao-code-action.info](http://www.fao-code-action.info)  
[www.oisat.org](http://www.oisat.org) (for non-chemical pest management)  
[www.pesticide-residues.org](http://www.pesticide-residues.org)

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