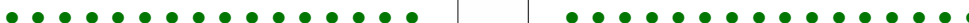




Did you know?

... that the **FAO Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides** calls on **Governments** to tighten controls on hazardous pesticides and promote safer alternatives?





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. 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 FAO Code of Conduct on Pesticides

makes an important contribution to 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 legislation and calls on all stakeholders, from governments via pesticide industry and farmers to public interest groups, to make active use of 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*. Although the Code of Conduct is not legally binding, the new version calls on governments to become active implementers of the Code, notably via tighter controls on the registration and sale of hazardous products and the promotion of safer strategies for pest management.





Good reasons

for implementing the Code deal with the whole life cycle of pesticides. 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.”

Sustainable farming practices already exist for a wide range of crops but are not yet widely adopted. Adequate institutional frameworks, like policy and marketing incentives are essential to create an environment where alternatives can flourish.

Avoiding toxic pesticides and reducing dependency on chemical pest management contributes human and environmental health, it can avoid unnecessary expenditures and can contribute to solving the upcoming energy crisis.





Governments

play a key role in setting standards for crop protection, in achieving transparency throughout the life cycle of pesticides as well as

protecting people and the environment from harm caused by pesticide use. The revised Code of Conduct was endorsed by governments at the FAO Conference of 2001 and adopted by the FAO Council in November 2002. It calls on governments to actively develop and implement pesticide laws and regulations, based at least on its principles and guidelines.

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

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



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.



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www.fao-code-action.info
www.oisat.org (for non-chemical pest management)
www.pesticide-residues.org

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