

Atrazine review is a much needed 'do-over'

Jul 21, 2011 by Kristin Schafer



Seventy-six million U.S. farms are doused with that many pounds of the herbicide atrazine every year. That's a lot of any chemical — and scientists link this one to [birth defects](#), infertility and the "[chemical castration](#)" of frogs.

Next week, EPA's science advisors will wrap up a 2-year process of rethinking atrazine, based on the latest studies of its health and environmental harms. People across the country will be watching closely to see just what happens next. So, without a doubt, will the [Syngenta corporation](#).

Hats off to Administrator Lisa Jackson's agency for recognizing the need for this review; more than 150 new studies have rolled in since EPA's last evaluation of the herbicide in 2003.

That last review also featured [50 closed door meetings](#) with Syngenta, atrazine's maker and chief promoter. Another good reason for a 'do-over.'

Follow the science, please

Last month, thousands of PAN supporters signed a [letter to Syngenta's CEO Michael Mack](#), urging him to pay attention to studies linking atrazine to birth defects.

As EPA's panel of scientists convenes for their final meeting next week, [another letter](#) from PAN is in the works. This one will go to Administrator Jackson, thanking her for taking the science on atrazine seriously, and encouraging her to stay with the science, wherever may it lead.

In 2008, USDA found [atrazine in 94% of drinking water](#) samples tested; it shows up more often in U.S. groundwater than any other pesticide. Hormone disruption, birth defects, infertility . . . exposure to low levels of the herbicide during pregnancy has been linked to all 3 health effects in infants — and more. The stakes are very, very high.

[Take Action >>](#) Please sign our letter to Administrator Jackson urging EPA to keep following the science.

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