No more secret atrazine science

Nov 3, 2011 by Pesticide Action Network

For over a year, PAN has been watching EPA's long-overdue review of atrazine, a common herbicide and potent endocrine disruptor. From the outset we've called for reliance on science not funded by industry – and we've been disappointed. Of the roughly 25 health-related studies submitted for the review's final session, 10 were not available to the public and exempt from the rigors of peer review. These 10 'secret' studies were also industry-funded.

Now the agency is accepting comments on a new petition to pull the use of atrazine, a petition that points to misleading industry-funded science as the basis for keeping this widely used herbicide on the market.

Corporate science is skewed

When Dr. Jason Rohr, an independent scientist from University of South Florida, took a look at industry-funded reviews of the effects of atrazine on fish and frogs, this is what he found:

[The] industry-funded review misrepresented more than 50 studies and included 122 inaccurate and 22 misleading statements. Of these inaccurate and misleading statements, 96.5% seem to benefit the makers of atrazine in that they support the safety of the chemical.

We see an unfortunate pattern here. Last time EPA reviewed atrazine back in 2003, atrazine's maker, Syngenta, lobbied the agency with over 50 closed door meetings in the run-up to that decision. EPA chose to keep the herbicide on the market even as Europe banned it because it's a water contaminant.

Syngenta has shown time and again — through closed-door lobbying, direct intimidation of scientists whos findings prove inconvenient, covert public relations campaigns and more — that they are serious and unscrupulous in their commitment to protect atrazine's market share in the U.S. At all costs.

As a result, today 94% our drinking water is contaminated with this chemical, which is known to have endocrine disrupting effects at extraordinarily low level of exposure, dramatically disrupts the reproductive systems of indicator species such as frogs, and has been linked to human birth defects and some types of cancer.

This time must be different » Urge EPA to discount and disclose the corporate science backing atrazine. Sign the petition today and tell EPA that this time around, we're watching, and

we expect the Agency to follow independent, unbiased science.

Source URL: http://www.panna.org/blog/no-more-secret-atrazine-science