California air data on pesticides continues to miss the mark

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Statement from Emily Marquez, PhD, staff scientist for Pesticide Action Network in response to new data about pesticides in air released by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation:

> “We’re pleased that the Department of Pesticide Regulation has continued their work on a more comprehensive pesticide air sampling program in the state.
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> Unfortunately, the current sampling scheme still fails to capture the scope of the problem of pesticide drift and exposure in the state.
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> The agency used the same sites and sampling scheme as last year's 2012 results [Salinas, Shafter, and Ripon]. For the past several years, Pesticide Action Network has worked with residents across the state to sample their air and found startling results. On-the-ground testing with our Drift Catcher indicates that rural children are exposed to far higher levels of pesticides in the air.
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> DPR sampled in a systematic but not targeted manner, with samples being taken once per week for 12 months. The most important time to monitor is during the times of peak use. The reporting of “average” concentrations over a year when a particular pesticide may only be used during a single month is misleading.
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> What’s important is that random sampling in more urban areas found large numbers of pesticides. In results similar to last year's findings, the neurotoxicant chlorpyrifos was detected in 44 of 156 samples taken in the three towns. This suggests that little has changed over the past year. Further investigation of the levels of chlorpyrifos at the peak times is key as DPR evaluates this pesticide linked harms to children’s health and intelligence.”

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