



## Farmworkers Protected — Finally!

by Margaret Reeves

September 28 was a great day for the nation's two million farmworkers and their families. The only rules in this country designed to protect those who work in our fields from on-the-job exposure to hazardous pesticides were greatly strengthened.

When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first implemented the federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS) in 1995, it was insufficient. Farmworker advocates and EPA initiated a first review of its weaknesses way back in 2000. Fifteen years later, we're celebrating the long-awaited, hard-won improvement of those rules.

PAN's members submitted tens of thousands of petition signatures over the years, and we worked persistently in close collaboration with our partners to achieve this milestone.

I vividly recall stakeholder meetings in California, Washington, D.C. and Florida. Farmworkers, advocates and health-care professionals all came together with data and stories to clearly and convincingly (so I thought) make the case that better protections were desperately needed to reduce the number of pesticide poisonings, workdays lost, and long-term health effects routinely experienced by farmworkers and their families, especially the most vulnerable among them—their children.

It took several administrations, and persistent organizing by our national coalition, before EPA administrator Gina McCarthy came through with the leadership needed. We didn't get everything we wanted, but the new rules are strikingly stronger.

### Why so important?

Farmworkers have one of the highest rates of chemical exposure among all U.S. workers. They are regularly exposed to hazardous pesticides throughout their work day—from mixing or applying pesticides to planting, weeding, harvesting or processing crops.

Studies show that pesticides cling to workers' skin and clothing long after they return home, putting their children at risk of long-term health impacts. Farmworkers often live in or near treated fields, and pesticides can also drift into their homes. They can be exposed by breathing in, touching or ingesting pesticides on food or in their homes and yards.

### Highlights of what we won:

- **Better training:** Safety training must now be provided every year instead of every five years, and must precede work in an area treated with pesticides.
- **Youth protections:** Youth under 18 may not apply pesticides.



USDA photo by Bob Nichols

Migrant workers harvest corn in Gilroy, California.

- **Access to information:** Workers must be provided timely access to information about the use, location and hazards of specific pesticides on the farms where they work.
- **Emergency assistance:** Employers must provide transportation to medical facilities and all relevant pesticide information in the event of a pesticide poisoning incident.

### What comes next?

EPA is planning to reach out to other federal and state agencies to ensure the rules' widespread implementation and enforcement. That's good news. WPS implementation is the responsibility of agricultural employers, and they can use plenty of help to fully understand their obligations under the new rules.

Enforcement, on the other hand, falls to the designated agency in each state. PAN and our partners will continue to monitor those agencies to ensure that this very important win translates into on-the-job protections for farmworkers. And, with your support, we will campaign for even stronger protections in the years ahead.

Follow us at [www.panna.org/frontline-communities/farmworkers](http://www.panna.org/frontline-communities/farmworkers). Dr. Margaret Reeves is a PAN Senior Scientist. 

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# No More Delays in Protecting School Kids by Kristin Schafer

As kids headed back to school this fall, there was both great and not-so-great news when it comes to pesticides. On balance, there's progress afoot for children's health—from pesticide-free school lunches to a nasty brain-harming chemical finally getting the boot.

## First, excellent news from the bench

Chlorpyrifos, that neurotoxic pesticide you've heard us talk about so often, at long last is headed for the dustbin.

Early in the summer, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signaled that it's finally considering pulling this widely used insecticide from the market, and that they would decide for certain by next April. Then, last month, a judge ordered them to act sooner—by October 31, to be precise.

The federal judge called the agency's inaction on chlorpyrifos "egregious." She also took the agency to task for ignoring its own assessment of the dangers of chlorpyrifos to human health.

The hard deadline is very, very good news for school kids across the country. Chlorpyrifos, banned for use in homes since 2000, has been linked to reduced IQs, changes in brain architecture and increased risk of autism and ADHD. In California, public health officials found it among the top 10 drift-prone pesticides used most often in agricultural fields within a quarter-mile of schools.

**Curious about the pesticides that show up on the fruits and veggies kids love—and their impacts on health? Take a look at [WhatsOnMyFood.org](http://WhatsOnMyFood.org).**



**What's on my food?**

## School lunch, hold the pesticides

A school district in Northern California became the first in the country to commit to an all-organic menu for its students. The meals will be prepared onsite by Conscious Kitchen, which develops school menus based on five principles: fresh, local, organic, seasonal and non-GMO.

The great thing is we know it's doable. This program has already been in place for two years, and this is simply an expansion. The pilot program served 156 students at Bayside Martin Luther King Academy in Marin City—and reported a drop in disciplinary problems, better attendance and a stronger sense of community.

Long-time PAN member Judi Shils, founding director of Turning Green, the local group that worked with Conscious Kitchen to put the program in place, declared:

"Although filibustering may be a venerable tradition in the United States Senate, it is frowned upon in administrative agencies tasked with protecting human health. Pesticide Action Network North America and the Natural Resources Defense Council have been waiting for years for the United States Environmental Protection Agency to respond to their administrative petition requesting a ban on the pesticide chlorpyrifos. Instead, they've received a litany of partial status reports, missed deadlines, and vague promises of future action."

—Judge Margaret McKeown, opinion for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, August 10, 2015

"Not only does this program far exceed USDA nutritional standards, but it ties the health of our children to the health of our planet. It's the first program to say that, fundamentally, you cannot have one without the other."

Hear, hear! Hopefully, this success story will inspire school districts across the country to move toward healthier food.

## And, now, the bad news...

Unfortunately, the not-so-good news is pretty bad. California officials decided in late August to continue the practice of "banking" use permits for the cancer-causing pesticide Telone. This means that if growers use less than the allowed amount of the chemical one season, they can roll it over to the following year.

Telone is used to fumigate the soil of strawberry fields, among other crops, and—along with chlorpyrifos—is one of the chemicals most often applied in close proximity to schools in California. As other fumigants are banned (including cancer-causing methyl iodide that PAN helped force from the market in 2012), Telone has been resurrected after years of restrictions.

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**Take Action** Urge California decisionmakers to close the Telone loophole, and protect school kids across the state from this drift-prone, cancer-causing chemical at [www.panna.org/telone](http://www.panna.org/telone).

# Susan Baker *A Board President's Perspective*

Often, a picture of the culture and mindset of an organization is revealed through its leaders. PAN is excited to welcome our incoming Board president, Susan Baker, who began her term this summer.

Susan is not a newcomer to PAN, having served on our Board for four years in various capacities, most recently as Treasurer. Her experience working in investment management and shareholder advocacy over a two-decade career for the sustainable investment firm, Trillium Asset Management, has served PAN well through the economic crisis and beyond.

Perhaps where Susan dovetails most with PAN is her steadfast belief in our mission, and her understanding of how PAN articulates this to a wider audience. At PAN, we tackle reliance on chemical-intensive industrial agriculture by working with farmworkers, health professionals, farmers, parents groups, Indigenous peoples and other organized constituencies for a healthier food system.

Susan has been able to connect PAN's work to her own when engaging companies as an investor on a wide variety of environmental and social issues—pesticide use reduction being one—and then prodding managements to adopt policies that lead to improved sustainable agriculture practices and outcomes that contribute to long-term shareholder value creation.

**“There are more sustainable paths forward and PAN is an important driver globally in this work to move all of us down this smarter path.”**

“PAN's powerful campaign illuminating pollinator declines helps shape a national conversation around neonicotinoids and their key role in this crisis,” noted Susan in a recent conversation. “PAN's ability to amplify credible research, provide leadership to a multi-stakeholder coalition, and



identify alternatives and solutions provides stakeholders, including investors like Trillium, a terrific framework for our shareholder advocacy work. There are more sustainable paths forward and PAN is an important driver *globally* in this work to move all of us down this smarter path.”

The primary motivation for Susan's years of tireless Board service to PAN and its core constituents is her desire to see responsible pesticide use management and active reduction become an economic imperative. She sees this as a “cross-cutting issue that impacts human health, particularly Indigenous peoples, communities of color, women and children, as well as the health of our environment.”

When asked about PAN's greatest strengths, she doesn't hesitate to point to the ever-growing and loyal supporter base. “As a donor myself, it is not lost on me that the generosity and consistent support of thousands of people around the world—financial or otherwise—sustains and brings innovation to this important work. With our active network of friends and supporters who share our vision, we can use a variety of tools to effect meaningful change and build a safe, fair and just food system.” —

**OUR MISSION**  
**Pesticide Action Network North America**  
works to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives. As one of five PAN Regional Centers worldwide, we link local and international consumer, labor, health, environment and agriculture groups into an international citizens' action network. This network challenges the global proliferation of pesticides, defends basic rights to health and environmental quality, and works to ensure the transition to a just and viable society.

**30+ YEARS** **90 COUNTRIES**

## Support PAN today!

Donate \$50 and receive a recycled aluminum Honey Bee Haven sign.



Donate \$10 per month or more and receive the “Bee the Change” mason jar and lid.

**Support PAN! Go to [www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org) and click “Donate.”**





## School Kids, continued from page 2

In timing that clearly underscores what's at stake, state officials announced continuation of the rollover loop-hole just as children headed back to school. Francisco Rodriguez, president of the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, told the press: "These unscientific and unsafe practices have put California children, especially Latinos, in harm's way."

PAN, along with concerned parents, teachers and Californians for Pesticide Reform, is calling for a stop to Telone banking. Please join us in keeping the pressure on decisionmakers. Let's keep making good news happen! —

Kristin Schafer, PAN's Program and Policy Director, has been lead author on several PAN reports, with particular emphasis on children's health. She serves on the Policy Committee of the Children's Environmental Health Network.

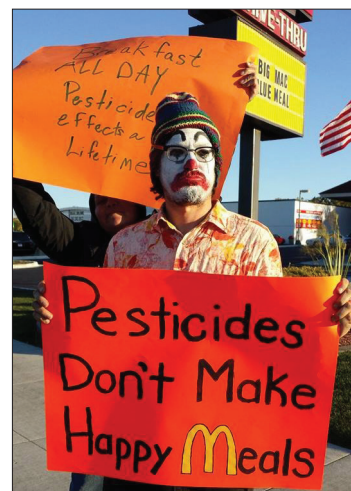


California's Department of Public Health found that pesticides are regularly sprayed within ¼ mile of schools across the state, with more than 500,000 school children affected. Schools near the most dangerous, drift-prone pesticide use have disproportionately Latino student populations.

## Toxic Taters Day of Action

The Toxic Taters Coalition of farmers, rural communities, environmental health advocates and Native organizations seeks to hold McDonald's accountable for pesticide use in its supply chain. Specifically, RD Offutt Company—one of McDonald's main potato suppliers and the largest potato grower in the world—is being pressured to reduce its pesticide use. Pesticides from potato fields drift onto nearby farms and communities compromising their health and vitality, particularly in Minnesota where 50,000 acres of potatoes are planted annually.

On October 6, people across the country held actions at 45 different McDonald's locations delivering letters to store managers, distributing information to concerned customers and demanding accountability. Nearly 8,000 of our supporters emailed the CEO of McDonald's calling on him to transition to sustainable potato production. And we flooded their corporate phone lines with calls. Help us tell McDonald's we're not lovin' pesticide drift at [www.panna.org/tell-mcdonalds-were-not-lovin-pesticide-drift](http://www.panna.org/tell-mcdonalds-were-not-lovin-pesticide-drift).



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