



## Farm to Family: Pesticide Free Week of Action Toolkit

Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>- Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> , 2016



On the week of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, join Toxic Taters , Pesticide Action Network, Corporate Accountability International, and allies across the country in calling on McDonald’s and RD Offutt (RDO) to protect communities who live near potato fields from pesticides. No matter where you live, you can be a part of Toxic Taters’ “Farm to Family: Pesticide Free” campaign by taking action on the week of October 2<sup>nd</sup>. This toolkit is a step-by-step guide to joining in - by organizing an event at a McDonald’s near you, delivering a letter, making a phone call, or speaking up online.

## Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction to Week of Action/Toolkit .....                 | pg. 3     |
| Campaign Background .....                                    | pg. 4-5   |
| Ideas for Action .....                                       | pg. 6-12  |
| Action Checklist .....                                       | pg. 12-15 |
| Report Backs .....   | pg. 15-16 |
| Know Your Rights .....                                       | pg. 16    |
| Talking Points .....   | pg. 16-17 |
| Letter to the Manager .....                                  | pg. 17-18 |
| Media Advisory .....   | pg. 18-19 |
| Media Release .....  | pg. 19-20 |
| Human health problems associated with potato pesticides..... | pg. 21-22 |
| Factsheet .....  | pg. 23-24 |
| Petition .....   | pg. 25    |
| Images .....   | pg. 26-30 |

## Thanks for joining us!

Thanks for taking action on the week of October 2<sup>nd</sup> in support of Toxic Taters' "Farm to Family: Pesticide Free" Campaign! This Week of Action will help show McDonald's and potato producer RDO that people around the country want the company to address the problem of pesticide drift. In this toolkit, you will find everything you need to plan an event, including: background information, action ideas, messaging tips, and more.

If you have any questions about planning your event, please don't hesitate to contact us directly:

Toxic Taters

[tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)

(218) 375-2600 (office)

(218) 850-3629 (cell)

If you're thinking about planning an event, please let us know so that we can keep track of what's going to be happening around the country. We can't wait to work with you!

## Campaign background

RD Offutt Company (RDO) is the largest potato producer in the world. Every year, they grow over 50,000 acres of potatoes, many of which turn into McDonald's french fries. Growing potatoes conventionally is a chemically intensive process, and at the height of the potato growing season, pesticides are applied to the potato fields every 5-7 days. Unfortunately, these pesticides don't stay where they're put, and frequently drift onto neighboring farms, homes, or schools, or contaminate nearby waterways.

*"We have grandchildren who come to play... that want to come play in the grass, play in the sand pile. We worry about how this [pesticide drift] affects them. We also worry about our garden, our animals we eat. How safe are we?"*

- Norma & Don Smith, local farmers in Frazee, MN



As a major purchaser of RDO's potatoes, McDonald's has the power to make positive change by requiring its growers to reduce pesticide use. But while McDonald's has pledged to reduce potato pesticides, so far the company has invested more in marketing its commitments than making good on them.

In 2014, tired of waiting for change, Toxic Taters ([www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)), made up of family farmers, rural community members, and Indigenous people in northern Minnesota, took the state by storm - crossing Minnesota with a major educational campaign teaching people about the damages of pesticides and how to get involved in the campaign. In October 2014, Toxic Taters and Pesticide Action Network organized a statewide Day of Action, holding actions at 16 stores across Minnesota, and working with partners around the country to email and call McDonald's. Since RDO and McDonald's still haven't stepped up and delivered on their word,

*Toxic Taters' "Farm to Family: Pesticide Free" National Week of Action Toolkit*

we're now organizing a national Week of Action to increase the pressure on McDonald's and demand that the corporation:

1. Require that its potato suppliers, like RDO, cut their use of pesticides
2. Tell the public what chemicals are being used on the potato fields
3. Fund studies to understand the human and ecological health effects on surrounding communities
4. Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture practices.

We need to remind McDonald's of its 2009 promise and insist that it is time to protect rural families from pesticide drift. Thank you for joining us in this effort.

*"McDonalds, you may be one of the largest corporations in the world, but you are also a part of our human community as well, and bear just as much responsibility as anybody else."*

- Bob Shimek, Mud Lake, White Earth Indian Reservation





## Calendar for Week of Action

As a nationwide movement, it is important that we coordinate our actions so that they can make the strongest impact. Our Week of Action is broken down into three forms of action (1)

Education, (2) Online, and (3) Onsite. This is shown on the calendar below:

| Sun, Oct 2            | Mon, Oct 3                      | Tues, Oct 4                                   | Wed, Oct 5                           | Thurs, Oct 6   | Fri, Oct 7   | Sat, Oct 8 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| Education             | Education                       | Online  | Online                               | Onsite   | Onsite   | Onsite     |
| Host a local speaker! | Join us for our Webinar 3pm ET! | Post on Facebook and share with your friends! | Share factoid sheet on social media! | Deliver a bag of pesticide free potatoes to McDonalds! | Deliver a letter to the manager at your local McDonalds! |            |

## Ideas for action

### Education (Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>-Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Are you enthusiastic about teaching people about the harms of pesticide use in potato farming and how RDO and McDonalds are involved? Educating the public about these key issues is a crucial pillar in making this movement successful, and there are many ways to make this happen.

**Discussion group:** Consider getting together a group of friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others in your community to have a discussion about this issue. This could be as informal or formal as you'd like. We recommend viewing the video at [www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org), sharing the factsheet (p. 23), and coming prepared with some discussion questions or comments of your own. Once people have had a chance to dig in and learn more about the issue, don't forget to give them an opportunity to take action! This could include making phone calls to McDonalds (see flyer p. 22-23), signing the petition (p. 26), or writing letters to McDonalds showing your solidarity with Toxic Taters and its demands (see p. 5 for a list of demands)

If you'd like help planning a discussion, please call (218) 850-3629 or email [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)

**Tabling:** Local events like fairs are a great place to spread the word about this issue. Distributing the materials that we have, such as the factsheet, would be an excellent way to disseminate the information about the campaign. And of course, give them the opportunity to take action, as discussed above. If you would like other ideas regarding how to effectively table, contact Amy at (218) 850-3629 or [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com).

**Attend our Webinar Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>:** This year, we will be hosting our very first webinar! This is a great opportunity to tune in from anywhere across the country to learn more about the issue, so spread the word. The webinar will begin at 3pm ET.

### **Online Actions (Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>- Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Are you social media-savvy? Join us online as we spread the word and make sure that McDonald's hears about our Week of Action. Follow us and mention us in your posts:

Twitter: [@ToxicTaters](#)

Facebook: Toxic Taters

Make sure to include these hashtags:

#NotLovinDrift

#NoMoreToxicTaters

Make this social media storm your own: post pictures of your action, invite your friends to tweet with you, and make sure to mention [@McDonalds](#) in everything you do!

Memes are strongly encouraged to share via Facebook and Twitter! Check our sample on pg.

### **Sample tweets:**

- [@McDonalds](#): No more [@ToxicTaters](#)! Keep Minnesota communities healthy: cut potato pesticides. [#NotLovinDrift](#)
- Pesticide drift from @McDonalds potato fields is a problem for human health and ecosystems. [@ToxicTaters](#) [#NotLovinDrift](#)
- [@McDonalds](#) pledged to take action on potato pesticides in 2009. [@ToxicTaters](#) and [name of your group] are tired of waiting.
- [@McDonald's](#), today [name of your group] is joining with @ToxicTaters to deliver a message: protect communities from pesticides. [#NotLovinDrift](#)

### **Sample Facebook posts:**

- McDonald's is the largest potato buyer in the country. Isn't it time they used their power to protect communities from pesticides? Learn more: [toxictaters.org](#)
- Today, [name of your group] went to a local McDonald's store and [describe your action]. We did it because McDonald's buys potatoes grown with hazardous pesticides. Those pesticides hurt communities who live near the potato fields. Speak up – sign the petition: [petition](#).

- In 2009, McDonald's promised to cut pesticides used to grow the potatoes for its "world famous fries." But for people living near the potato fields, the pesticide problem hasn't stopped. McDonald's, this is unacceptable. Learn more: [bit.ly/tatersPSA](http://bit.ly/tatersPSA)

**Sign the petition** at [toxictaters.org/petition](http://toxictaters.org/petition) or <http://www.panna.org/issues/related-actions/were-not-lovin-pesticide-drift> and get your friends to do the same!

### Onsite Actions

***For all onsite actions, keep in mind:***

- Please review the Action Checklist (p. 11) and Know Your Rights (p. 15) sections prior to planning your action.
- No matter which action you pick, please make sure you deliver a letter to the manager (sample on p. 16). You can sign the letter on behalf of yourself, your group, or "in solidarity with Toxic Taters." If they won't accept the letter, leave it on the counter.
- Make sure everyone in your group has a shared understanding of what you're doing and why, and that they all sign the petition (p. 24). People can also sign online at <http://www.panna.org/issues/related-actions/were-not-lovin-pesticide-drift> or <http://www.toxictaters.org/petition>
- Regardless of which action you pick, be sure to take plenty of factsheets (p. 24) and ¼-sheet flyers (p. 22) to hand out to McDonald's customers and people who pass by.



**Potato pesticides in our bodies:** This tactic helps show how exposure to hazardous pesticides can impact people's health, especially for people who live near the potato fields and breathe pesticides in their air and drink them in their water.

*Number of people needed:* 3 or more

*Materials needed:*

- large poster, sheet, or piece of cardboard to trace life-size human body
- markers
- stickers - could be red dots, X's, or anything else to signify a particular spot.

*How to do it:*

On the day of the action, enter McDonald's as a group. You may choose to wear the same color to show unity.

Hold up the body outline image. One person begins to read from the attached list of health problems (p. 20-21) that are associated with exposure to potato pesticides. While they read, another person should put a sticker on the body outline, on the relevant body part. For example, as one person reads, "Pesticides used to grow McDonald's potatoes are associated with liver cancer," another person should put a sticker on the outline on the liver (near the top of the abdomen, on the right side, just under the chest). Continue reading and marking the body until you've either read the whole list, or McDonald's has asked you to leave.

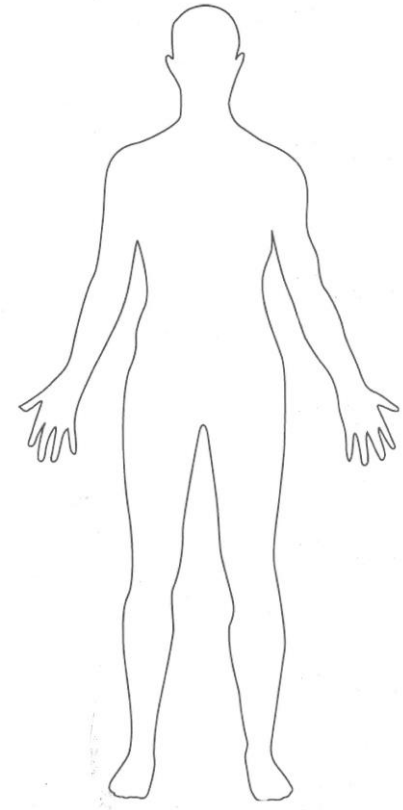
Participants who aren't reading or working with the body can 1) hand out flyers to customers, 2) deliver the letter to the manager while the performance happens, and/or 3) silently witness the performance.

Once McDonald's staff asks your group to leave, you can move your group to the public sidewalk outside the store. Continue to hold up the body, hand out flyers, and collect petition signatures.

Don't forget to take video and photos and send them to [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)!

**Non-toxic potato delivery:** This tactic reminds McDonald's that it's possible to grow potatoes without hazardous pesticides - in fact, farmers across the country are already doing it.

*Number of people needed:* 3 or more



*Materials needed:*

- A bag of potatoes, grown without hazardous pesticides (If possible, get these potatoes from a local farmer who is growing potatoes without harmful pesticides. If not, you can go to the store and buy a bag of certified organic potatoes)
- A bag for the potatoes, marked with a very visible label that says “Non-toxic taters”

*How to do it:*

On the day of the action, enter McDonald’s as a group. Designate one person to be the spokesperson ahead of time, and have that person carry the bag of potatoes.

Inside the store, approach the cash register. Loudly enough for people throughout the store to hear (remember, this is theater!), say something like, “I’d love to eat some McDonald’s world famous fries, but I heard that you only sell Toxic Taters! We thought we’d help you out by bringing you some non-toxic taters to use from now on. These were grown by a local farmer without pesticides - which means they don’t harm the people who live near the fields.”

Hand over the bag of potatoes, along with the letter to the manager. Until a McDonald’s employee asks you to leave, participants can hand out flyers and talk with customers.

Once McDonald’s staff asks your group to leave, you can move your group to the public sidewalk outside the store. Continue to hand out flyers and collect petition signatures.

Don’t forget to take video and photos and send them to [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)!

***The McDonalds art gallery:*** This tactic uses creative visuals to inform McDonald’s customers and passers-by about toxic taters and the rural and Indigenous communities that are fighting back.

*Number of people needed:* 2 or more

*Materials needed:*

- large sheets of paper or cardboard
- markers, crayons, or paints
- tape

*How to do it:*

Before the Week of Action, get your group together for an art build: create signs and posters with messages about the campaign, eg:

- Rural communities say “NO” to toxic taters. #NotLovinDrift

*Toxic Taters’ “Farm to Family: Pesticide Free” National Week of Action Toolkit*

- Ronald McDonald: Poisoning the people since 1954. #NotLovinDrift
- Fungicides are sprayed on over 50,000 acres of potato fields for McDonald's french fries. #NotLovinDrift
- McDonald's we don't want your toxic taters. #NotLovinDrift

These are just some suggestions. Get creative and make your own! See p. 27-29 for some images that you can print and use in McDonald's stores.

On the Week of Action, get your group together and take all the signs you made to your local McDonald's store. Put them up on the storefront outside, as well as inside - leave them on tables and chairs, stick them up on walls, etc. If you have a large enough group, some people can do this while 1-2 people deliver a letter to the manager and others engage people who are noticing the artwork by handing them flyers and talking to them about the issue.

Don't forget to take video and photos and send them to [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)!

**Get Creative:** Take action in your own way! Perhaps you want to create flashy signs, put on a skit about the health harms of pesticide drift, or even dress up as a potato. The choice is all yours -- and we're here to help. Call (218) 850-3629 or email [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com) if you'd like help planning or putting on a different action.



### Alternatives to Onsite Actions: Offsite actions

If you don't want to participate in an in-store action for any reason, there are still important ways for you to be involved!

**Phone calls:** Follow the directions on the flyer (p. 22-23) to call McDonald's HQ and have a conversation with them about our cause. Be sure to get as many people involved as you can. Once you make your phone call, ask 5 friends to do the same. There is strength in numbers!

If you are located on a college campus or a similar high-traffic area, set up a table in a central location. Reach out to people passing by and educate them on our campaign, asking them to stop and place a quick call to McDonald's. Have the directions sheet available to them and set a goal to work towards! Can you get 20, 50, or 150 people to stop by and place a call? Make sure to keep track of how many calls are made from your call-in action.

## Action checklist

### Steps to Action Planning

1. **Why?** Determine your group's goals for participating in the Week of Action. How will this action help Toxic Taters Campaign? (Are you hoping to get an article in the local paper about the campaign? To gather 100 signatures? To interact directly with the McDonald's manager and customers?)
2. **Factors** Consider the specific factors of your community or campus before you decide what kind of action to plan. Think through the location of your McDonald's, the skills and comfort level of your group, what time of day most of your friends/supporters will be able to help.
3. **What will it be?** Once you've set goals and considered the context, decide the details of your event. Will it be a call-in day on your campus? A potato delivery at the store? A street theater performance outside McDonald's?
4. **Prepare for your action**
  - *Scout:* Visit the site of your action. Know how to get there, how to give directions, and how much public sidewalk space there is.
  - *Plan a schedule:* When will the event start and end? What time should everyone arrive? Will there be speakers?
  - *Delegate roles:* Think through all of your preparation as well as the roles needed on the day of the event. Who will be in charge of printing materials, talking to the manager, contacting media, taking photographs, following up with Toxic Taters, etc.?
  - *Make/print your materials:* Many of the materials you will need are in this toolkit. But think about making big signs or props to make your event livelier and photo-friendly.
  - *Study the campaign messaging:* On p. 15 of this toolkit you will find a guide for talking to others about Toxic Taters campaign. Practice explaining the issue, so that you will be confident on the day of your action.

- *Have fun at the event!* Whether you are planning a call-in day or a store demonstration, Toxic Taters Week of Action should be fun! Enjoy the day and help your friends/volunteers have a good time by keeping your spirits up and rolling with whatever happens.
- *Report to the :* Remember to let Toxic Taters know how your event goes. We want photos and stories! For more details on follow-up, see p. 14.

## What to do & when

Let us know what you're planning and how we can help. The following is a helpful checklist, but you'll have to adapt it to your plans. Some of the steps may not apply to your event. Keep in mind, if you or your group is participating in more than one day during the Week of Action, you can provide updates after each day you participate!

### TWO TO FOUR WEEKS BEFORE EVENT

- \_\_\_\_\_ Choose your site for the event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide how you want to participate (Education, Online, or Onsite)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set a time and specific meeting place for the event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Generate a list of interested participants, either from your own group members or by speaking or tabling at other events. Invite other groups to participate in the event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send out an invitation to e-mail lists, make a Facebook group/event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on messaging for your event. Use our sample talking points on pg. 15 as a starting place. Think about how the images you use can reinforce those messages
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make visuals for your event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get your event listed in any relevant campus or community events calendars

### ONE WEEK BEFORE EVENT

- \_\_\_\_\_ Call everyone who is on your list of confirmed or potential participants and remind them that the event is coming up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create visibility around your event by postering, chalking, putting up flyers, and inviting people to your event on Facebook and other social media.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize specific roles for the day of the event (who will talk with the press, the manager, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send out a press advisory to local media (see p. 17)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do a site check: determine where people can gather, park, etc. Decide which spots will make for the best pictures and allow you to interact with the most people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize your own program and schedule. (Who is speaking when? What will they say? When will you do the letter delivery?)

## **TWO DAYS BEFORE EVENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Call and confirm all the people who said they would attend
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call the media to confirm they'll be attending
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate transportation to and from event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize your press release
- \_\_\_\_\_ Print all your materials (petitions, flyers, etc.)

## **THE DAY OF THE EVENT - BEFORE:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Text participants to remind them of the time and location
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call the media to confirm they have the correct address/time



## **THE DAY OF THE EVENT - AFTERWARDS:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Send your pictures and stories to [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send your press release to local media (see end of toolkit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up with local media to answer any questions

## **Let us know how it went**

There's no way to tell if our Week of Action has been a success until we hear it from you! It doesn't matter if your action has 2 people or 200. Together, our numbers will add up and help us get McDonalds' and RDO to act.

Remember, your action will have a big impact on the people who see it happen live -- and an even bigger impact when we spread the word to a much bigger audience online and in the media. PAN and Toxic Taters can help amplify each individual action, but we need you to tell us what is going on in your area. Here are a few ways to keep us in the loop:

### **Throughout the week**

Tweet your updates, mentioning @toxictaters and using the hashtag #NotLovinDrift

Email: [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)

Call (218)-850-3629 or call or text (218)-850-3629

Great information to send includes: Where are you? What are you doing? Who's there? What's the reaction to your action? How many people are taking part? Pictures and quotes are always helpful!

### **At the end of the week (or until you are done participating)**

Send those final tweets and updates to Toxic Taters Facebook page. Email Amy ([tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)) with an update on what's happened throughout the day. Be sure to include: where, when, who, what, why and how. Send links to any media or other outreach. This will help Toxic Taters spread the word and continue to build energy.

## After the Week of Action

Send us any media that comes out of your action. If anyone signed a paper copy of the petition (p. 26) please scan or take a picture of the petition and send it to us. And, send us contacts for anyone who is interested in being part of Toxic Taters campaign. Do you have future events that you want Toxic Taters to be a part of? Would you like to help out with the campaign in other ways? Let us know!

Toxic Taters Coordinator: Amy S. Mondloch

[tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)

(218) 375-2600 *office*

(608) 658-5954 *cell*

[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

## Know Your Rights

All of the actions suggested in this toolkit are legal. That said, it is always a good idea to keep in mind local laws when you are planning an action. If you are inside a McDonald's store and you are asked to leave, the safest option to avoid legal trouble is to go. Meanwhile, it is your right to flyer or petition on public sidewalks without a permit. For more detailed legal information, visit this website:

<https://www.aclu.org/free-speech/know-your-rights-demonstrations-and-protests>

## Talking points

With people taking action across the country, we will have the greatest impact if we coordinate our message. As you talk to the media, curious customers and potential supporters, stick to these talking points. It will show that we're well organized and know the facts.

1. In 2009, McDonald's pledged to take action to reduce pesticides in potato production. They haven't done that. Now is the time to follow through and take responsibility on their word.
2. McDonald's uses 3.4 billion pounds of potatoes every year. It is the largest purchaser of potatoes in the U.S. and has the power to make change in how potatoes are grown, creating the possibility of protecting people's health and ecosystems.
3. The demands of Toxic Taters campaign are simple. We want McDonald's to:

- Require that its potato suppliers — like RDO — achieve measurable and significant decrease in use of health-harming pesticides.
  - Require its potato producers to release information on the chemicals they apply to their crops.
  - Fund an human and ecological health studies on the regions impacted by potato production.
  - Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture practices.
4. Pesticide drift is harmful for people’s health. It can cause both immediate harm and long term health effects. Children are especially vulnerable to pesticides in food, air, water and soil. It’s time that McDonald’s takes a stand and says no to health-harming pesticides!

## Letter to the Manager

Oct 7, 2016

(Include local contact info)

Dear Manager,

I am here today in solidarity with Toxic Taters, which is based in rural northern Minnesota. Toxic Taters is fighting to stop the harmful effects of pesticide drift on communities in potato growing regions. Exposure to pesticides in our air has been shown to harm human health, particularly putting growing children at risk. These health impacts include but are not limited to: weakness, stomach aches, respiratory problems, and cancer. At the height of the growing season, potato fields are sprayed with pesticides every 5-7 days. Air testing in the surrounding areas has confirmed that these harmful chemicals do not stay where they are sprayed—in fact, they can drift more than a mile.

We know that health-harming pesticides are drifting off of the nation’s potato fields, and we know that McDonald’s, as the largest potato purchaser in the country, can create positive change by addressing this problem. *Toxic Taters campaign has the following four demands of McDonald’s:*

1. Require that its potato suppliers, like RDO, achieve measurable and significant decrease in use of health-harming pesticides.

2. Require its potato producers to release information on the chemicals they apply to their crops.
3. Fund human and ecological health studies on the regions impacted by potato production.
4. Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture practices.

As customers and community members, we want our local McDonald's to meet these demands. We want to be able to eat McDonald's world famous fries while promoting healthy environments for rural Minnesota and everywhere else.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[individuals' names, group name, and contact information]

## Sample Press Advisory

### Toxic Taters Holds Week of Action in [local community name] and Across the U.S.

#### For More Information Contact:

Amy S. Mondloch: Toxic Taters Coordinator  
218-375-2600  
218-850-3629 (c) or [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

[AND/OR]

ADD LOCAL CONTACT PERSON HERE

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, people all over the country will stage demonstrations at McDonald's storefronts as part of a coordinated national effort to pressure the fast food giant to curb hazardous pesticide use in its potato supply chain, and especially with its major supplier RD Offutt Company. These efforts are being coordinated nationally by Toxic Taters , Pesticide Action Network, Corporate Accountability International and locally by (name of local group or person).

What: [e.g. Letter delivery and rally at McDonald's store] \_\_\_\_\_

Where: [full address, including information about parking if relevant] \_\_\_\_\_

When:     [time and date]    

Visuals: [Media, especially TV, are interested in events that are visually appealing. Describe any visuals, like photo opportunities or performances]

[[Insert any other details about local action that would interest the media, like and a quote from one of the organizers about why they are doing this. Say enough to entice the media to attend, but don't reveal all the details of your action.]]

During the action, the following demands will be presented to McDonald's:

1. Require that its potato suppliers- like RDO- achieve measurable and significant decrease in use of health-harming pesticides.
2. Require its potato producers to release information on the chemicals they apply to their crops.
3. Fund human and ecological health studies on the regions impacted by potato production.
4. Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture practices.

###

## Sample Press Release

**\*\*\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*\*\***

### **Toxic Taters Holds Week of Action in [local community name] and Across the U.S.**

#### **For More Information Contact:**

Amy S. Mondloch: Toxic Taters Coordinator  
218-375-2600  
218-850-3629 (c) or [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

**[AND/OR]**

**ADD LOCAL CONTACT PERSON HERE**

Today, community members in [name of your community] joined with people across the country to tell McDonald's: "We're not lovin' it!" On the week of October 2<sup>rd</sup>, people everywhere are showing their support of a growing community effort in rural Minnesota known as Toxic Taters , by calling on the fast food mega-giant to use its influence to get RD Offutt

Company to stop massive use of pesticides on potato fields across the central and northern regions of the state.

In [name of local community], community members [or name of your group] went to a local McDonald's store and [describe the action. Attach 2-3 high quality photos if you have them.].

Toxic Taters, Pesticide Action Network and Corporate Accountability International have organized this national Week of Action to draw attention to damage being done to people and the environment because of pesticide use by RD Offutt, one of the suppliers of potatoes for McDonald's french-fries.

"INSERT QUOTE FROM LOCAL ORGANIZER HERE"

The McDonald's Corporation, which uses more than 3.4 billion pounds of U.S. potatoes annually, is the largest potato buyer in the U.S. If the company can be convinced to cut pesticide use in its potato production, it will mean a massive change for how potatoes are grown and could be a huge benefit for ecosystems and human health. However, at this point all the company has made are promises. In 2009, McDonald's pledged to take action on the problem of potato pesticides. No meaningful progress has been made on that promise thus far.

Toxic Taters is making four requests of McDonald's.

1. Require that its potato suppliers- like RDO- achieve measurable and significant decrease in use of health-harming pesticides.
2. Require its potato producers to release information on the chemicals they apply to their crops.
3. Fund human and ecological health studies on the regions impacted by potato production.
4. Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture practices.

###



## Human health problems associated with exposure to potato pesticides

1. Chlorothalonil [pronounced klor-o-thal-o-nil]: *Known carcinogen*, as listed on CA Prop 65 list of known carcinogens
  - a. Cancers of the kidney and forestomach
  - b. Severe skin and eye irritant
  - c. respiratory irritation
  - d. kidney and liver damage
  - e. embryo loss during pregnancy
  - f. gastritis (inflamed stomach lining)
  - g. genetic damage
2. Metam Sodium: *Known carcinogen*, as listed on CA Prop 65 list of known carcinogens
  - a. fetal loss
  - b. burns
  - c. eye irritation
  - d. anemia
  - e. lung and liver damage
  - f. difficulty breathing
  - g. nausea
  - h. diarrhea
  - i. blurred vision
  - j. anxiety

Metam sodium poisonings have occurred as far away as one mile from the application site. In one drift incident in California, over 150 people were affected.

3. Chlorpyrifos [pronounced klor-peer-if-os]: *interferes with the nervous system*
  - a. endocrine (hormone) disruptor
  - b. ADHD
  - c. low birthweight and head circumference
  - d. lung and prostate cancers
  - e. nausea
  - f. diarrhea
  - g. blurred vision
  - h. respiratory paralysis

Human exposure to chlorpyrifos is evidenced by its concentration in our bodies. Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed chlorpyrifos breakdown products in 93% of U.S. residents sampled between 1999 and 2000. Humans can be exposed to chlorpyrifos that drifts from nearby fields, or from residue in common foods such as apples, peaches, and sweet peppers.

4. 2,4-D: *probable human carcinogen*
  - a. interferes with reproduction, pregnancy, and child development
  - b. non-Hodgkins lymphoma
  - c. birth defects
  - d. low sperm count, abnormally shaped sperm
  - e. difficulty breathing
  - f. vomiting
  - g. headaches, dizziness
  - h. irritation of eyes, skin, and throat
  - i. immune system suppression
  
5. Mancozeb: *Known carcinogen*, as listed on CA Prop 65 list of known carcinogens
  - a. thyroid tumors
  - b. interferes with child development
  - c. inflammation of the nose/throat, bronchitis
  - d. reduced fertility
  - e. skin rashes
  - f. nausea
  - g. dizziness
  - h. eye irritation
  - i. gastrointestinal upset
  
6. Thiamethoxam
7. Imidacloprid
8. Metolachlor
- 9.

# Toxic Taters

Minnesotans not lovin' pesticide drift

The Toxic Taters coalition is made up of small farmers, White Earth tribal members, parents, grandparents, and other rural community members who are being affected by pesticides drifting from potato fields in northern Minnesota. We encourage and support agricultural production that does not harm people or animals (domestic and wild) or pollute the air or water.

We want food grown in ways that are healthy for us all, and we are calling on the McDonald's Corporation to ensure that the potatoes they buy are not harming Minnesota communities. **Will you join us?**

## Minnesota's potato pesticide problem

Potato fields cover 50,000 acres of Minnesota farmland, especially in the central and northwest parts of the state. When they're conventionally produced on a large scale, potatoes are a chemical-intensive crop. Fungicides are applied to 98% of Minnesota's potato acres.

At the height of the growing season, potato fields are sprayed with pesticides as often as every five days. These chemicals don't stay put — instead, they drift from potato fields onto neighboring farms, and into homes and schools.

After experiencing the harmful effects of potato production for years, community members in several Minnesota counties (Todd, Becker, Otter Tail, Wadena, and Mahanomen) began testing their air for pesticide drift. The science confirmed what these communities already knew: **potato pesticides drift far and wide.**

One or more pesticides were found in 66% of air samples tested (of 340 air samples taken between 2006–2009). Air monitors detected many pesticides, including chlorothalonil, chlorpyrifos, pendimethalin, PCNB, and 2,4-D.

The most frequently-detected chemical was a fungicide called chlorothalonil. EPA classifies this chemical as "highly toxic" when inhaled and a "probable" carcinogen. This chemical is applied to 83% of potato acres in Minnesota, with an average of 9.9 applications per year in each field.



*"The companies responsible need to stop this chemical trespass into our land, air, water and our lives."*

— Bob Shimek, Mud Lake, Minnesota

## Communities & ecosystems pay the price

Pesticide drift is harming the health and livelihood of people in Minnesota's potato-producing regions. Small farmers have lost livestock that they suspect were poisoned by pesticide drift. Some residents have **developed serious chronic health problems that coincide with pesticide drift** incidents.

The ecological impacts of pesticide-intensive potato production are equally worrisome. Chlorothalonil is highly toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Residents report seeing hundreds of dead birds after pesticide applications. And fungicides are known to harm the immune systems of honeybees and native pollinators.

## Minnesota communities call on McDonald's to make the following changes:

1. Require that its potato suppliers — like RDO — achieve measurable and significant **decrease in use** of health-harming pesticides.
2. Require its potato producers to **release information** on the chemicals they apply to their crops.
3. Fund an independent **human and ecological health study** on the regions impacted by potato production.
4. Ensure that its potato producers adopt environmentally sound, **sustainable agriculture** practices.

## McDonald's has the power to make change

Most acres of potato production in Minnesota are owned or leased by one major potato grower: Ron D. Offutt, or RDO. **RDO is the largest potato producer in the United States**, and also a major supplier of potatoes for McDonald's french fries.

McDonald's buys more than 3.4 billion pounds of U.S. potatoes every year. As the largest potato purchaser in the world, McDonald's decisions drive the potato market.

In 2009, McDonald's pledged to reduce the use of pesticides on its potatoes. But since this announcement, residents in Minnesota's potato-producing regions have seen no signs of pesticide reduction in their area.

McDonald's has the power to create change in potato-producing regions around the country by making good on their promise to cut down on pesticide use. Now is the time for them to act.

### Health harms of pesticide drift

When pesticides are in the air, we breathe them or absorb them through our skin. Pesticides often have no smell and it can be hard to know when they're present. Exposure to pesticide drift can cause two types of health problems: (1) immediate poisoning, and (2) chronic health concerns related to ongoing exposure.

Children are more easily harmed by pesticide drift than adults. Even at small doses, pesticides can affect a child's ability to learn and grow, and may cause allergies, breathing problems or other health issues that last for life. In addition to the health effects we understand, there's also a great deal that is unknown: for example, how multiple pesticides interact in our bodies, or how "inert" ingredients impact our health.

*"If people knew how the french fries they eat are contributing to the health and environmental problems of others, I think they would care. McDonald's needs to look at who's growing their potatoes. They talk about sustainability, and I think this is part of that picture. Is it healthy and sustainable for the community that lives nearby?"*

— Carol Ashley, Park Rapids, Minnesota

## Choosing safe taters & healthy communities

Farmers across the country are growing potatoes sustainably with fewer pesticides. Use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques in Idaho potato fields increased profits and avoided thousands of pounds of pesticide use. In Europe, IPM techniques have reduced fungicide use by up to 60%. We know RDO can do it too: in fact, RDO grows potatoes organically in other states.

**We urge McDonald's and RDO to rise to this challenge, partner with sustainable agriculture experts and certifiers, and transition to cutting edge, sustainable potato production.**

## Get involved!

1. **Sign the petition** to McDonald's! You'll find it at [toxictaters.org](http://toxictaters.org).
2. **Spread the word** about the campaign via social media, email, and phone. Share the petition, this fact sheet, and other materials with your networks in Minnesota and around the country.
3. **Invite us to your community.** Members of the Toxic Taters coalition will be traveling to cities and towns around Minnesota to tell their stories and share more information about our campaign. Can your community organization, church, or other group help host a local event? If you're interested in learning more, contact us.
4. **Learn more.** Visit our website to find the latest updates on how you can help press McDonald's to do the right thing.
5. **Organizations: endorse our campaign!** We invite organizations of all sizes to join us in pressing McDonald's for change.



### Resources Cited

USDA NASS. (2010) 2010 Minnesota Agricultural Statistics. U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service.  
 USDA NASS. Agricultural Chemical Use Database. U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service.  
 Associated Press. (2009) McDonald's the holy grail for potato farmers.  
 Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides. (Spring 2005) Journal of Pesticide Reform: Another Successful Harvest for NCAP's Potato Project.



## Minnesotans not lovin' pesticide drift

## Tell McDonald's: No More Toxic Taters!

[illegible]

## **Tell McDonald's: No more toxic taters!**

Minnesota homes, farms and schools are surrounded by potato fields where many of the potatoes for McDonald's french fries are grown. At the height of the growing season these fields are sprayed with pesticides every five days. Exposure to pesticides in our air has been shown to harm human health.



We want food grown in ways that are healthy for us all. We are calling on McDonald's to ensure that the potatoes they buy are not harming Minnesota communities.

**Call McDonald's at 1-800-244-6227 or  
talk with a store manager about why you're  
not lovin' pesticide drift!**

## **Tell McDonald's:**

### **No more toxic taters!**

Minnesota homes, farms and schools are surrounded by potato fields where many of the potatoes for McDonald's french fries are grown. At the height of the growing season these fields are sprayed with pesticides every five days. Exposure to pesticides in our air has been shown to harm human health.



We want food grown in ways that are healthy for us all. We are calling on McDonald's to ensure that the potatoes they buy are not harming Minnesota communities.

**Call McDonald's at 1-800-244-6227 or  
talk with a store manager about why you're  
not lovin' pesticide drift!**

## **Tell McDonald's: No more toxic taters!**

Minnesota homes, farms and schools are surrounded by potato fields where many of the potatoes for McDonald's french fries are grown. At the height of the growing season these fields are sprayed with pesticides every five days. Exposure to pesticides in our air has been shown to harm human health.



We want food grown in ways that are healthy for us all. We are calling on McDonald's to ensure that the potatoes they buy are not harming Minnesota communities.

**Call McDonald's at 1-800-244-6227 or  
talk with a store manager about why you're  
not lovin' pesticide drift!**

## **Tell McDonald's:**

### **No more toxic taters!**

Minnesota homes, farms and schools are surrounded by potato fields where many of the potatoes for McDonald's french fries are grown. At the height of the growing season these fields are sprayed with pesticides every five days. Exposure to pesticides in our air has been shown to harm human health.



We want food grown in ways that are healthy for us all. We are calling on McDonald's to ensure that the potatoes they buy are not harming Minnesota communities.

**Call McDonald's at 1-800-244-6227 or  
talk with a store manager about why you're  
not lovin' pesticide drift!**



## What to say to McDonald's:

*"I'm calling today with the Toxic Taters Coalition. I want to ask you to adopt sustainable practices in your potato purchasing. Please stop buying potatoes that poison local communities with regular pesticide drift. There are better ways to produce potatoes that don't damage public health and the environment."*

For more information, visit  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

Twitter: @Toxic Taters  
Facebook: toxictaters

## What to say to McDonald's:

*"I'm calling today with the Toxic Taters Coalition. I want to ask you to adopt sustainable practices in your potato purchasing. Please stop buying potatoes that poison local communities with regular pesticide drift. There are better ways to produce potatoes that don't damage public health and the environment."*

For more information, visit  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

Twitter: @Toxic Taters  
Facebook: toxictaters

## What to say to McDonald's:

*"I'm calling today with the Toxic Taters Coalition. I want to ask you to adopt sustainable practices in your potato purchasing. Please stop buying potatoes that poison local communities with regular pesticide drift. There are better ways to produce potatoes that don't damage public health and the environment."*

For more information, visit  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

Twitter: @Toxic Taters  
Facebook: toxictaters

## What to say to McDonald's:

*"I'm calling today with the Toxic Taters Coalition. I want to ask you to adopt sustainable practices in your potato purchasing. Please stop buying potatoes that poison local communities with regular pesticide drift. There are better ways to produce potatoes that don't damage public health and the environment."*

For more information, visit  
[www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)

Twitter: @Toxic Taters  
Facebook: toxictaters

Photos to use with your actions / on social media

If you'd like digital versions of any of these photos, please email [tatercoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:tatercoordinator@gmail.com)







McDonald's food. || We have questions.

**McDonald's: It's time to deal with your pesticide problem.**

McDonald's sources potatoes grown with drift-prone, cancer-causing pesticides. Rural communities are saying: **We're not lovin' it.**



#NotLovinDrift [www.toxictaters.org](http://www.toxictaters.org)



**Of the 50k acres of potato fields in Minnesota, 98% are sprayed with harmful fungicides that drift to neighboring communities.**

**Take action >> <http://bit.ly/ToxicTaters>**

*Tell McDonald's to buy toxic-free taters!*

 <http://www.toxictaters.org>  
**#NotLovinDrift**



