National Human Rights Commission Report Confirms Widespread Use Of Dangerous Pesticides In Mexican Agriculture

Carlos Navarro
National Human Rights Commission Report Confirms Widespread Use Of Dangerous Pesticides In Mexican Agriculture

by Carlos Navarro

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, February 17, 1993

A report released Feb. 11 by the National Human Rights Commission (Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) warns that 26 of the more than 150 pesticides and herbicides used in Mexican agriculture are creating serious health problems, not only for farmers, but for the general population as well. According to the report, many of these chemicals are imported from developed countries where their use is banned or restricted due to health risks. Ailments which can result from exposure to these pesticides and herbicides include headaches, nausea, respiratory difficulties, skin disorders, menstrual irregularities, and brain damage. In some cases, high levels of exposure can result in permanent illness and even death. Of all pesticides and herbicides used in Mexico, 76% are applied to cotton, potato, tomato, melon, soybean, basic grains and vegetables. Roughly 30% of the chemicals are applied manually by farmers or farm workers who lack protective equipment, exposing areas of their bodies. According to the CNDH, due to introduction of chemicals such as DDT, dieldrin and heptachlor to the water supply and the food chain, Mexicans have one the world's highest incidence of toxic substances in their blood. (Source: Spanish news service EFE, 02/11/93)

-- End --