



**COALITION ON
ENVIRONMENTAL
AND OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH HAZARDS**

Toxics Coordinating Project
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RELEASE
EMBARGO UNTIL 10:00 A.M. PST
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 6

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GROUPS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF USE OF PESTICIDE CAUSING BIRTH DEFECTS

At a news conference today at the San Francisco offices of Consumers Union, six organizations concerned about toxics called for a world-wide ban on use of the agricultural herbicide Dinoseb. The widely used chemical has been shown to cause serious birth defects in studies recently submitted to EPA. Dinoseb has been found in groundwater in at least three state.

Cesar Chavez, of the United Farm Workers of America said "We're calling for a nationwide, world-wide ban, total and complete -- no ifs ands or buts." Also participating in the news conference were Ralph Lightstone of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Dr. Marion Moses of the National Farm Workers Health Group, Lawrie Mott of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Michael Picker of the Toxics Coordinating Project and Don Villarejo, Ph.D., of the California Institute for Rural Studies.

At the event, the participants released a letter to EPA administrator Lee Thomas in which the group said "...American companies should not be allowed to export to other countries chemicals considered too toxic for use in our own country; therefore the ban should be world-wide."

The move was supported by a number of other organizations including: Citizens for a Better Environment, Concerned Neighbors in Action, Greenpeace, National Campaign Against the Misuse of Pesticides, National Farmworker Ministry, National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards, Pesticide Education and Action Project cooperating with Pesticide Action Network International, and The Sierra Club.

(attachments)

Dinoseb Fact Sheet
10/6/86

Common name: Dinoseb, Dinitro, DNBP (dinitrobutylphenol)

Chemical name: 2-sec-butyl-4,6-dinitrophenol

Type of pesticide: Contact herbicide for control of broadleaf weeds

Basic Producers: Drexel, Hoechst AG, A.H. Marks Ltd., Uniroyal, Universal Crop Protection Ltd., Vertac

History: Patented in 1940 by Dow Chemical Co. and introduced in 1945

Usage: United States: approximately 6 to 11 million pounds (EPA estimate)
California in 1984: 818,274 pounds (CDFA use reports)

Major crop use:

	United States		California
soybeans	3,500,000 lbs	alfalfa	292,163 lbs
potatoes	1,350,000 lbs	grapes	131,180 lbs
cotton	1,300,000 lbs	almonds	57,949 lbs
peanuts	740,000 lbs	fallow land	46,533 lbs
snap beans	186,000 lbs	potatoes	32,073 lbs
green peas	165,000 lbs	citrus	15,786 lbs
grapes	170,000 lbs	cotton	14,559 lbs
almonds	120,000 lbs		

Regulation

Dinoseb is a restricted use material. (This means that application must be done by a certified applicator, a permit is required for use, and use must be reported.)

Reentry into treated fields is allowed "when dusts have settled and spray has dried" (except California which does not allow reentry for 24 hours).

Dinoseb is a Toxicity I category pesticide, ie. the most toxic and the word "Danger" and the skull and cross bones must be on the label.

Animal toxicity:

Oral LD50 rat, 25-46 mg/kg

Dermal LD50 rat, 135-200 mg/kg

Causes cataracts in ducks and dogs

Can cause formation of methemoglobin

Can cause coproporphyrinuria, urobilinogenuria

Carcinogenicity : Classified by EPA as a category C oncogen (i.e. limited evidence of carcinogenicity in animals) It produced benign adenomas of the liver in female mice which were not dose related. Certain formulations are known to be contaminated with nitrosoamines, which are potent animal carcinogens.

Immunotoxic effects have been seen in hamsters

Testicular effects seen in male rats (i.e. may cause sterility)

Teratogenic in mice by intraperitoneal injection (imperforate anus, acaudia)

(1948 study)

Teratogenic in rabbits (neural tube defects) at a level which does not produce toxicity in the dam (1986 study).

Maternal toxicity, fetal toxicity and teratogenesis increased in mice when ambient temperature increased.

Environmental effects:

Highly toxic to fish, toxic to bees, birds

Persistent in soil. No good data on ecological fate.

Ground water contaminant (has been found in California, Massachusetts, New York).

The extent of contamination nation-wide is not known and environmental fate and water monitoring data are not available.

Human health effects:

Human poisoning

There are no figures available for the United States on how many workers are poisoned by Dinoseb and related compounds. The California Department of Food and Agriculture records show that there were 88 occupational dinitrophenol poisonings REPORTED in California from 1981 to 1985.

Death

Dinoseb, and all dinitrophenol pesticides, are highly toxic to humans and have caused death in occupationally exposed workers. The most recent known death was that of a 24 year old farmworker in Texas in 1983, who died three days after beginning work applying Dinoseb using a backpack sprayer. He was inappropriately treated with aspirin (which makes Dinoseb poisoning worse) in the hospital emergency room for his temperature of 112 degrees.

Liver, kidney, nervous system

Dinoseb is rapidly and almost completely absorbed through the intact skin, the eye, the lungs and when swallowed. It can cause toxic hepatitis, leading to liver failure as well as kidney disease and damage to the brain. The dinitrophenols are very slowly excreted by the body and workers can build up a toxic dose from small daily exposures. It is thus a cumulative toxin.

The eye

Dinoseb is readily absorbed through the eye. There are case reports of severe eye damage from splashes. Visual loss may occur.

Effects of heat

The most severe poisonings occur in workers exposed during hot weather. Profuse sweating, headache, thirst and weakness are common early symptoms of poisoning. Weight loss is common if the poisoning occurs with low doses over a period of time. In fact, a chemically related drug was used as a weight reducing agent in the 1930s but was discontinued because of the concern with cataract formation.

Wearing protective clothing may increase the toxic effects of Dinoseb and related compounds. Heat prostration may result if full protective equipment is worn when the temperature is above 80 degrees. And this temperature is exceeded almost daily in agricultural areas during the summer when a large amount of Dinoseb is used.

Statement of Cesar Chavez
President, United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO

Fourteen months ago we called for the ban of five toxic pesticides as part of our boycott against fresh California table grapes. One of these pesticides was Dinoseb, which has now been found to be a very powerful cause of birth defects and sterility.

Farmworkers have died, lost their vision and have been seriously poisoned by exposure to this pesticide, which has been on the market for more than 40 years.. EPA has some animal studies which prove what we knew all along. Even if farmworkers wore space suits and used closed systems of application, they could still not be protected against birth defects and male sterility from this dangerous chemical.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture in its own press release admitted the great risk to human health from exposure to Dinoseb and suspended all permits for its use. Within two days this action was reversed.

We know that with CDFR, EPA and other agencies, the primary consideration is not human health and safety. It is time that the public health and not the profits of the agribusiness and agrichemical industries be the priority in decisions regarding pesticide use in agriculture.

We are therefore pleased to join with NRDC and other groups in asking for a nationwide, world-wide, total and complete ban on any use of Dinoseb, no ifs ands or buts. Farmworkers, consumers, and the environment have been poisoned long enough.

Statement of Marion Moses, M.D.
National Farm Workers Health Group

For more than 40 years farmworkers, consumers and the environment have been exposed to one of the most deadly poisons being used in agriculture today.

Dinoseb not only is a potent teratogen (causes birth defects) but it causes male sterility, affects the immune system, causes liver tumors in mice, produces cataracts, can cause methemoglobinuria and coproporphyrinuria, can result in toxic hepatitis, liver failure, kidney failure, and affect the brain and nervous system.

Some workers do not survive their encounter with Dinoseb. The most recent known death occurred in Texas in 1983 when a 24 year old farmworker died after three days of spraying the herbicide. He was inappropriately treated with aspirin in the emergency room where he died.

Dinoseb is a powerful metabolic poison that disrupts the basic energy systems of the cell. Since it is very slowly excreted by the body, a "cumulative toxic dose" can build up over time with seemingly insignificant small exposures. It is readily and almost completely absorbed into the body from all routes of exposure; the intact skin, the eye, the lungs, and when swallowed.

Dinoseb is an example of a pesticide that cannot be used safely under ANY conditions of agricultural practice. It is much too toxic, employers do not protect or instruct their workers, doctors do not know how to recognize or treat poisoning.

Because of slow excretion and rapid absorption, environmental persistence and potential to contaminate drinking water and food crops, Dinoseb and related compounds pose an unacceptable risk to public health. They should be totally banned from all use in agriculture.

Statement of Lawrie Mott
Natural Resources Defense Council

The Natural Resources Defense Council joins with the United Farm Workers and other organizations today to call for the immediate world-wide ban of the herbicide Dinoseb.

As you already heard, this chemical could have devastating effects on human health, including severe birth defects, male sterility and possibly cancer.

American consumers may be exposed to Dinoseb as residues in either food or drinking water.

Dinoseb is widely used throughout this nation on a large variety of food crops such as alfalfa, almonds, apples, beans, berries, corn, grapes, potatoes and soybeans. It is used on 50% of the U.S. potato crop. Unfortunately, we have very little information about what levels of Dinoseb may be in these foods, because the federal government's typical laboratory tests cannot detect Dinoseb residues. However the government has conducted a small number of tests in the last two years that revealed low levels of Dinoseb residues in food.

Another source of consumer exposure to this pesticide is drinking water. EPA has identified Dinoseb as having a high potential to contaminate ground water. The herbicide has already been found in drinking water wells in California, Massachusetts, and New York as a result of agricultural use. At the present time groundwater is rarely analyzed for Dinoseb levels, therefore it is likely that with improved testing the number of drinking water wells contaminated with Dinoseb will increase in the future.

Dinoseb presents serious health risks to both workers and the general public. NRDC supports its immediate and total world-wide cancellation. We cannot allow continued application of Dinoseb because there is simply no way to use this chemical safely.

Statement of Ralph Lightstone
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Pesticide companies and government agencies may keep a highly dangerous pesticide on the market by adding new warnings to the labels, or increasing restrictions on its use. This approach will not work with Dinoseb because label changes are ineffective and practically unenforceable.

First, farmworkers, including pesticide applicators, have been EXCLUDED from Workers Right-to-Know laws at both federal and state levels. Growers are not required to provide the warnings and disclosures that other employers must provide workers.

Second, farmworkers, including pesticide applicators have been EXCLUDED from OSHA jurisdiction in pesticide safety matters at the federal and state levels. Instead, throughout most of the country, including California, the state and local departments of agriculture are in charge of enforcing pesticide safety laws. Their record enforcing pesticide safety laws is dismal. That is not surprising since they see their primary job as promoting agriculture and pesticide use. This conflict of interest was documented by the Congressional General Accounting Office in its 1981 report: "Stronger Enforcement Needed Against the Misuse of Pesticides."

Dinoseb label warnings would not work even if there was a credible enforcement program. Workers handling the pesticide often do not see the label at all. The person who fills the spray rig, rather than the applicator, is often the only person who sees the container. Even if seen, the labels are practically unreadable. They are packed with small print and code words that are confusing.

In the past, industry and government have used 2 schemes to prevent exposure to pesticides that cause birth defects and sterility in workers. If the pesticide

causes sterility in men, ban the pesticide and keep the men (see for example DBCP). If the pesticide causes birth defects in the offspring of pregnant women, ban the women and keep the pesticide.

There is no safe way to use Dinoseb. Label restrictions will not work, they will simply create discrimination. The EPA should ban Dinoseb, not women workers.

1:00 pm 10/29/86



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STATEMENT BY DR. DON VILLAREJO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR RURAL STUDIES

Our call for an immediate ban on all use of Dinoseb represents the first time in our ten year history that we have demanded a suspension of a pesticide. We take this stand not only because of the serious health threat that Dinoseb ~~represents~~ ^{isopresents} but also because farm workers are experiencing a threat to their health and well-being that is being ignored by most of the agricultural community.

Each year, California doctors file more than 1,000 reports of occupational illness of agricultural workers related to pesticide exposure. A summary of recent numbers of such reports filed with the Worker Health and Safety unit of the state Department of Food and Agriculture is shown below.

California Doctors' Reports of Occupational
Illness Due to Pesticides, 1980-84

Year	Number of Reports
1980	1,414
1981	1,093
1982	1,334
1983	1,270
1984	1,156
1985	1,516

Last year
↳

These figures are widely recognized as understating the true extent of farm worker poisoning by occupational exposure to pesticides. This is because many poisonings are not treated while others are not recognized as being caused by pesticides.

Three separate field interviews of workers indicate the extent to which the statistics quoted above understate the full extent of pesticide illness among farm workers.

A 1981 survey conducted by the Tulare County Health department found that 428 out of 472 farm workers interviewed reported that they or a family member had a health complaint which they attributed to agricultural chemicals.

A 1973 field survey of 1,416 workers in Monterey and Stanislaus Counties found that farmworkers suffer disability due to pesticide exposure at a rate more than 250 times larger than the rate suggested by doctors reports! And a 1969 field survey found the rate to be at least 125 times larger than doctors reports suggest. We believe that 100,000 farmworkers ~~per year~~ are made sick by pesticides each year in California. Truly, we are facing a pesticide poisoning epidemic in California.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL PICKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE TOXICS COORDINATING PROJECT

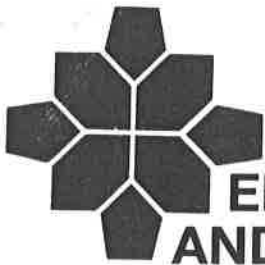
I'm Michael Picker, with the Toxics Coordinating Project, which is a statewide network of 105 different groups and leaders of constituencies in California concerned about toxics, both in the workplace and the environment. This network includes labor, environmental and public interest groups, as well as victims of toxic exposures.

The group that is gathered here represents the kind of coalitions that are building in California around toxics issues. Here today are six major organizations, with the support of many others, calling for worldwide actions against the pesticide Dinoseb.

Participating are Cesar Chavez, of the United Farmworkers of America, AFL-CIO; Ralph Lightstone, of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; Marion Moses, M.D, of the National Farmworkers Health Group; Lawrie Mott of the Natural Resources Defense Council; Michael Picker of the Toxics Coordinating Project; and Don Villarejo, Ph.D, of the California Institute for Rural Studies.

What is important here is that these groups, with widely differing agendas and priorities, have chosen to jointly act in an area of mutual concern. That concern is over illness, injury and health risks to farmworkers exposed to Dinoseb. Adequate actions to protect farmworkers will also protect public health and the environment.

Also supporting actions against Dinoseb are: Citizens for a Better Environment; Concerned Neighbors in Action; Greenpeace; the National Campaign Against the Misuse of Pesticides; the National Farmworker Ministry; the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards; the Pesticide Education and Action Project cooperating with the Pesticide Action Network, International; and the Sierra Club.



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2609 Capitol Avenue
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(916) 441-4077

October 6, 1986

Lee Thomas, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
401 M St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Thomas:

As citizens concerned about health risks and environmental contamination from the use of toxic agricultural chemicals on farm products, we are writing to let you know of our response to recent actions of the EPA in regard to Dinoseb.

We are asking that all uses of Dinoseb be immediately banned throughout the United States--no ifs ands or buts. We do not feel that existing stocks should be allowed to be used, nor should there be a phase-out.

We also feel that American companies should not be allowed to export to other countries chemicals considered too toxic for use on products in our own country; therefore this should be a world-wide ban.

We append to this letter the names of additional organizations who support us in this action.

Sincerely,

Cesar E. Chavez
United Farm Workers of America
(805)822-5571

Ralph Lightstone
Calif. Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
(916)446-1416

Marion Moses, M.D.
National Farmworkers Health Group
(415)731-6569

Lawrie Mott
Natural Resources Defense Council
(415)421-6561

Michael Picker
Toxics Coordinating Project
(916)441-4075

Don Villarejo, Ph.D.
California Institute for Rural Studies
(916)756-6555

attachments

Additional Organizatons Supporting Action Against Dinoseb

Michael Belliveau
Citizens for a Better Environment
(415)788-0690

Sandra Marquardt
National Campaign Against the Misuse of
Pesticides (202)543-4312

Penny Newman
Concerned Neighbors In Action
(714)685-8634

John O'Connor
National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards
(617)482-1477

Kate Karam
Greenpeace
(415)674-4747

Rev. Fred Eyster
National Farmworker Ministry
(415)465-3264

Monica Moore
Pesticide Education and Action
Project, in cooperation with the
Pesticide Action Network, In-
ternational (415)771-7327

Carl Pope
The Sierra Club
(415)776-2211