

December, 2008

Dear [Local MPP]

As an Ontario farmer, I support and practice the responsible use of pesticides. The Ontario government is proposing regulations under the *Pesticide Act* that would prohibit the cosmetic use of pesticides and as a result, profoundly impact my farm business.

These regulations are not based on science and contain the following threats to the agricultural industry:

- neighboring infestations of weeds and pests become the my problem;
- there is active lobbying to apply restrictions or bans to farming practices;
- the public will develop a negative perception of farming operations and products;
- no new pest control technology will be introduced in Ontario thereby jeopardizing my competitiveness.

As a farmer I ask you to support a delay in this pesticide regulation to enable the ***development of scientific criteria as the basis for revised regulations.***

Sincerely,

[signature]

A concerned Ontario Farmer

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- The current act seriously jeopardizes the ability of farmers to farm, remain competitive and have access to better crop protection tools.

Questions and Answers:

What impact will the new legislation of Bill 64 have on farmers?

- *Neighbouring infestations of weeds or pests become a farmer's problem.*
- *Active lobbying to restrict or ban pesticides on farming operations are underway..*
- *Negative public perception of farming operations and products.*
- *No new technology will be introduced in Ontario jeopardizing our competitiveness.*

What are farmer's doing about the potential ban?

Members of the OFA, the largest general farm organization, are involved in a letter writing campaign to local MPPs. Farmer's are insisting on science-based regulation.

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OFA's Speaking Points

Re: Government of Ontario's Proposed Ban on Cosmetic Use of Pesticides

December, 2008

Key Message:

Ontario farmers support the responsible use of pesticides. The new regulations to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides are not science-based and will have detrimental effects on farm businesses and our economy.

Speaking Points:

- The farmers of Ontario believe in the responsible use of crop protection products.

Pesticides are a very important tool and need to be used responsibly similar to pharmaceuticals. They are critical to enabling farmers to grow enough quality food to sustain local food systems.

- The new pesticide regulations need to be delayed to allow for development of scientific criteria on which to base the new legislation.

Currently there is no criterion for adding or deleting products to the prohibited list; sports fields can be treated if hosting 'national events'; so called 'natural' products like mercury, arsenic and lead are considered safe while synthetic products are not; outdoor plants can be brought indoors to be sprayed. These rules are not science based.

- Agricultural crop protection product use is well regulated.

*Ontario farmers already have stringent rules on the storage and application of pesticides. Farmers must be trained and certified under the Grower Pesticide Safety course before they can purchase or use crop protection products. Both farmers and vendors must re-certify every five years to keep current on advancements in product management, safety and regulations. Through Integrated Pest Management strategies and the Grower Pesticide Safety Course, **Ontario farmers have reduced crop protection product usage by over 50% in the past 20 years.***

Ad Manuscript

Headline: Farmers.... your business is science based.

Ontario... your regulations AREN'T!

Copy: Ontario farmers support the responsible use of pesticides. The Ontario government is proposing regulations that would prohibit the cosmetic use of pesticides that will affect our farming businesses. These regulations are not based on science!

The absurdities:

- No explanation nor criterion for adding products to the prohibited list.
- Sports fields can be treated if hosting "national events".
- Ontario's Pesticide Advisory Committee has no role in determining where non-commercial products are classified.
- "Natural" products such as arsenic, mercury and lead are equated with "safe" while synthetic products as "unsafe" – where is the science?
- Outdoor plants can be brought indoors to be sprayed.

The impacts:

- Neighboring infestations of weeds or pests become the farmer's problem.
- Active lobbying to apply restrictions or bans to farming operations.
- Negative public perception of farming operations and products.
- No new chemistry will be introduced in Ontario jeopardizing our competitiveness.

All Ontario citizens should rally against bad regulation. We invite you all to contact your MPP to insist the Pesticide regulations be delayed to enable:

- Development of scientific criteria as the basis for these regulations

Farmers must insist on science-based regulation! Call your MPP today!

Subhead: Visit www.ofa.on.ca or www.croplife.ca/web/mailmp/ for assistance.

Visual: OFA logo and Agcare logo.