

Animal Birth Abnormalities Not Related To Pesticide Use

The use of pesticides cannot be considered responsible for undesirable genetic changes, birth abnormalities, or reduced performance in animals if the pesticides are used as recommended by the manufacturer and approved by various state and federal regulatory agencies. This was the main conclusion of Dr. Lowell L. Wilson, associate professor of animal science at The Pennsylvania State University, in recent testimony before the Pennsylvania Senate committee studying the use of pesticides in the Commonwealth.

The report was based on a comprehensive review of scientific literature dealing with different factors that have produced "mutations, which are changes in the genetic material carried by plants and animals, or abnormalities at birth. Among the non-chemical agents having these undesirable effects are radiation, age of parents, and temperature.

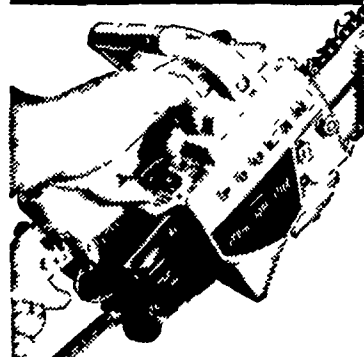
Several chemical agents, including some rather common pesticides, have also reportedly caused birth abnormalities. In practically all research studies in which these chemicals were used, the amounts of the chemicals were many times greater than the amount to which an animal would be exposed under normal conditions of pesticide usage.

Dr. Wilson also cited studies in which common salt, butyl alcohol, caffeine from coffee, and carbon tetrachloride cleaning solution had reportedly caused the same undesirable effects.

Several studies were conducted by injection of chick embryos with the test material. According to Wilson, many of the birth abnormalities may have been caused by physical damage to the embryo tissue rather than by the chemical nature of the materials.

There is practically no possibility, he concluded, that the use of pesticides at approved levels, and applied by recommended methods will result in undesirable effects. Without proper pesticide usage, the level of agricultural production would be greatly reduced and certain natural resources, such as forests, could be ravaged by insects.

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