



An unprecedented investigation on viticultural employees and vineyard neighboring residents: What is their exposure to viticultural pesticides?

The APAChe investigation: Analysis of agricultural pesticide presence in hair.

Background Information. France remains the top pesticide user in Europe with 62 700 tons of active ingredients sold in 2011. Despite the launch of the Ecophyto plan in 2008 and its announced objective of a 50% reduction of pesticide use within ten years as well as the exclusion of the most dangerous active ingredients, pesticide consumption has increased of 2,7% between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 . As a result, workers as well as recreational gardeners and consumers are still exposed to active ingredients which can be endocrine disrupting chemicals, neurotoxics or possibly carcinogens.

With 783 000 hectares in 2011, vineyard represents 3.7% of the utilized agricultural area but is responsible for consuming roughly 20% of the pesticides used in agriculture, among which a majority of fungicides (80%).

The APAChe Investigation. Going strong with these elements, Générations Futures and Marie-Lys Bibeyran, a viticultural employee, embarked on an investigation to answer the question: “Are viticultural employees who do not directly handle pesticides but work in the vineyard, and nearby residents contaminated with viticultural pesticides?”

Thus, between mid-October and mid-November 2012, they collected hair samples from 25 people (15 viticultural employees , 10 people who are not viticultural employees among which 5 nearby residents of the vineyards and 5 “control” individuals living far away from any vineyard). Analyses have been conducted by the specialized laboratory Kudzu Science to determine the presence or absence of viticultural pesticide residues.

Worrying results. Results demonstrated what was feared:

- 11 times more pesticides residues in average among viticultural workers than the “control” group dwelling far away from the vineyard (6.6 pesticides found in average versus 0.6)
- 4 of 15 of the viticultural employees exhibit 10 different pesticide residues
- 5 times more pesticides residues in average among non-professional neighboring vineyard than the “control” group living far away (3 pesticide residues found in average against 0.6)
- 74% of authorized pesticides within vineyard from the pre-established list for the study were found at least once among tested individuals
- A forbidden product, the Diuron was found in the hair of one employee.
- More than 45% of the found molecules have been listed as possible carcinogens in Europe or in the United States!
- More than 36% of the found molecules are suspected to be endocrine disruptors.

“Just before the opening of the Paris International Agricultural Show, these results clearly demonstrate that the exposition of the agricultural workers to dangerous pesticides is important,

even for those who do not handle the products. This report also shows that the simple fact of living close to cultivated areas, less than 250 meters away, which is probably the case of millions of French families, increase the exposure” says F. Veillerette, spokesperson of Générations Futures.

“It is essential to acknowledge the health scandal of pesticides in France, we cannot be sick and simultaneously ignored as victims any longer, it is an unacceptable double punishment! Pesticides suspected of being carcinogenic must be banned without leaving any opportunity to exhaust existing stocks!” adds ML Bibeyran.

“Our fellow citizens will have the opportunity to demand, along with us, the quick establishment of all these measures, during the next Week for Pesticides Alternatives taking place between the 20th and the 30th of March in France, several African and many European countries, a group of nation which grows each year.” sums up N. Lauerjat, campaigner at Générations Futures.

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