

ACTION brought health statements from over 200 residents who had suffered from the carbaryl sprayings. We brought petition signatures of some 2,500 people and doctors' letters were delivered by the attorney who represents those who had been hospitalized as a result of exposure to the pesticides used in the project over the past year. Two of the letters offered laboratory analyses confirming their diagnoses: a four year old child, Andrew Johnson, and a five year old, Daniel Bowman, now suffer depressed immune syndromes as a result of their pesticide exposure. Both of these children were hospitalized four and five times each, respectively, Andrew for a total of 22 days. Despite hearing over two hours of testimony and reviewing our documents, the medical panel rubberstamped CDFA's protocol to liberally dose us with more of the same: whatever (except for the banned chlordane), whenever, and wherever. Recommendations were made to provide medical hotlines (something we've had in the past: people are directed to "see their own physicians"); establish screening clinics for blood and urine analysis; give 24 hour advance notice; establish better community relations; and "educate the public as to the need for eradication projects." This last recommendation is a crowning insult. The real health hazards of the chemicals are once again denied, we are the sacrificial victims for agribusiness with no analysis of or compensation for the burdens we are forced to assume in lost health, reduced living quality, and lost crops, but we are also forced (as taxpayers) to pay for CDFA's propaganda campaigns.

It is really doubtful to me that many farmers want urban dwellers to experience this kind of jeopardy from nearly unrelenting pesticide exposure. Who, indeed, does profit from "eradication" projects? CDFA now has an annual 41 million dollar budget to "eradicate" exotic pests detected in California. With improved detection methods, pests that inevitably migrate or are repeatedly & unknowingly brought in are more apt to be detected in the thousands of traps placed throughout California. It is likely that many of these minor populations would die out, as has been asserted by entomologist Steve Dreistadt, a research specialist with Citizens for a Better Environment.⁷ With 41 million dollars, however, CDFA is well equipped to launch their delousing campaigns at the appearance of a single Japanese beetle, Mediterranean, Oriental, Mexican or Caribbean fruit fly, gypsy moth, apple maggot, or cotton boll weevil. There have been a minimum of six such campaigns to date this year and their spraying affects at least a hundred thousand people, by conservative estimate.

Other groups besides ours have been formed to protect their own well being. Perhaps these groups, created throughout the state at such numbers, can generate a successful ballot measure along the lines of ACTION's petition. Many California legislators seem loath to spurn agribusiness and petrochemical company dollars that are contributed to their campaigns. An August 1984 Auditor General's report declares via its title as well as data, that "The State Lacks the Data Necessary to Determine the Safety of Pesticides."⁸ This report has apparently made little impact on votes regarding public health measures: witness AB 2635* scooting through the Legislature. It is up to the people themselves to enact health and safety measures; the State and Federal government is doing little to protect us.

* AB 2635 is a measure that denies California cities and counties the right to ban or regulate the use of any pesticides (see p. 31).

A Note on Civil Disobedience

In order to leave on a slightly upbeat note, I should point out that some of the people here, in addition to their educational and legal efforts, have practiced very real but somewhat subtle civil disobedience. Some were arrested (and may gain compensation via their suits for false arrest); others put grazing animals in their yards to avoid oftanol (federal label prohibits its use except on turf). Almost everybody, we learned though a telephone poll, *washes off the carbaryl*, thereby nullifying its effect since carbaryl hydrolyzes rapidly when washed with any alkaline substance such as common household soap. Even outside the activist group, it gets washed off simply because people don't like it on their plants.⁹

On August 20, in protest of the renewal of diazinon soil applications combined with garden stripping (and they even want us to strip our gardens for them), activists sang "We Shall Overcome" in front of CDFA's downtown headquarters. It sounded good and felt even better: it is a commitment to resist until the insanity CDFA promulgates ceases.

*We shall wash it off,
We shall wash it off.
We shall wash it off, come May.
Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.*

References

1. Thirty-one beetles were detected in 1983, sixty-seven in 1984. Of the 1984 finds, nearly all were in their emerging pupae form dug out of the ground on one property.
2. The panel members are: T. Ladd, Chair and Director of the USDA Japanese beetle laboratory in Wooster, Ohio; M. Klein a colleague of Dr. Ladd; P. Heller, Pennsylvania State University; H. Tashiro, Cornell University; J. Katsanos, USDA-APHIS, Philadelphia; F. Andrews, R. Fehlman and R. Dowell, all CDFA employees.
3. We have been also defamed as "welfare recipients" by Lori Johnson, CDFA's Assistant Chief of Pesticide Registration, in a talk she gave to the Kiwanis Club when she was unaware of the presence of the press. (Stephen Green, "Welfare Recipients Linked to Fight Against Oftanol", *Sacramento Bee*, December 30, 1983) This was a description calculated to alienate professionals from identifying with concerned citizens in the community. As it is patently untrue, the statement backfired and Johnson publicly apologized. We have also been described as "hypochondriacs" by Gera Curry, CDFA's public relations person to *Sacramento Bee* reporter Travis Brown. Curry issued a tongue lashing to Brown for a story in which he portrayed residents here as normal, concerned humans with relationships to other activist groups concerned with pesticide abuse.
4. *Sacramento Bee*, August, 1983 article by Thom Akemun.
5. "Historical Perspective of Organophosphorus Ester Induced Delayed Neuropathy" by Dr. Robert Metcalf (University of Illinois) describes OPIDN as "characterized as a clinical syndrome of humans and domestic animals for over 50 years" and goes on to relate that the White Leghorn chicken [as used by Wilson] can screen this syndrome [in humans] and declares that "there is presently no definable safe level for chronic exposure to pesticides producing OPIDN." *Neurotoxicology* 3 (4) pp 269-284, Intox Press, Inc., 1982.
6. *Report from Wilson to CDFA* (Mr. Magee) November 21, 1983.
7. Stephen Green, "New Invaders Join Old Pest to Bug State" *Sacramento Bee*, June 17, 1984, pp A-1 & 20.
8. This report is available for \$2 from the Office of the Auditor General; 660 J Street, Suite 300; Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 445-0255.
9. *Fair Oaks Post*, "Water Use is Soaring" August, 1984, Vol. I No. 8, p. 5.