Report Shows U.S. Drinking Water and Watersheds Still Widely Contaminated by Hormone Disrupting Pesticide, Atrazine

May 4, 2010

how safe is your tap water?

Chicago, IL (rushPRnews) 05/04/10 — Updated Groundbreaking Report Shows U.S. Drinking Water and Watersheds Still Widely Contaminated by Hormone Disrupting Pesticide, Atrazine

New Water Data Reveals Broad Contamination Missed by EPA Monitoring

-- A widely used pesticide known to impact wildlife development and, potentially, human health continues to contaminate watersheds and drinking water throughout much of the United States, according to a new report released today by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

“Sadly, new data doesn’t point to new results -- atrazine can be found everywhere we look,” said Jennifer Sass, PhD, NRDC Senior Scientist and an author of the report.“

Banned by the European Union, atrazine is the most commonly detected pesticide in U.S. waters and is a known endocrine disruptor, which means that it affects human and animal hormones. Last year, NRDC’s *Poisoning the*

Well report shined a bright light on widespread contamination of American drinking water by the pesticide atrazine.

An EPA investigation of the chemical kicked off soon after the report was released and magnified by prominent media coverage, with expert meetings being held all last week in DC. The report authors today released Still Poisoning the Well, which uses updated data and new scientific research to show that the vexing problem continues throughout the Midwest and southern United States.

Atrazine season is here, and while it is great to see the U.S. EPA revisiting the registration of this pesticide, until they change monitoring policy high concentrations in drinking water will continue to be ignored," said Sass. This exposure could have a considerable impact on reproductive health. Scientific research has tied this chemical to some ghastly impacts on wildlife and raises red flags for possible human impacts."

The report reveals that all of the watersheds monitored by EPA and 80% of the drinking water sampled tested positive for atrazine. Contamination was most severe in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. An extensive U.S. Geological Survey study found that approximately 75 percent of stream water and about 40 percent of all groundwater samples from agricultural areas contained atrazine, and according to the New York Times, an estimated 33 million Americans have been exposed to atrazine through their drinking water systems.

"The extent of contamination continues to be shocking," said Mae Wu, an attorney in NRDC's Health and Environment program focused on the regulation of pesticides, toxins and drinking water. "It has been found everywhere that regulators have looked for it. Given the troubling questions that continue to be raised by independent scientists, we continue to believe that this dangerous weed killer needs to come off the market so that we can keep it out of our drinking water."

"People living in contaminated areas need to be made aware, so they can

use filters to protect themselves," said Sass.

Click here for the full report, including detailed maps of affected areas and Google Earth applications.

The contamination data in the report was obtained as the result of a Freedom of Information Act requests. The report highlights watersheds and municipal water treatment systems most affected by the chemical contamination, offers policy solutions, and describes actions that people can take to protect themselves from exposure to this dangerous chemical in their water.

Atrazine is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), EPA has determined that an annual average of no more than 3 parts per billion (ppb) of atrazine may be present in drinking water. One of the chief findings of the report was that this reliance on a "running annual average" allows levels of atrazine in drinking water to peak at extremely high concentrations.

Given the pesticide's limited economic value and the fact that safer agricultural methods can be substituted to achieve similar results, NRDC recommends phasing out the use of atrazine, more effective atrazine monitoring, the adoption of farming techniques that can help minimize the use of atrazine to prevent it from running into waterways. The report also underscores the importance of using home filtration systems.

The effects associated with atrazine have been documented extensively. Some scientists are concerned about exposure for children and pregnant women, as small doses could impact development of the brain and reproductive organs. Research has also raised concerns about atrazine's "synergistic" affects, showing potential for the chemical having a multiplier affect to increase toxic affects of other chemical co-contaminants in the environment. A study in Indiana showed a significant correlation between atrazine in tap water and low birth weight.

Report authors Mae Wu and Jennifer Sass have new posts on NRDC's Switchboard blog with additional evaluation of the report's findings.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.3 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

Related NRDC Webpages:

Atrazine: Poisoning the Well

Switchboard, from NRDC :: Spring Means Weedkiller In Our Water

Switchboard, from NRDC :: NRDC releases new atrazine report today

Media Contact Name: Josh Mogerman

Media Phone: 312-651-7909

Media Web Address: http://www.nrdc.org/media/2010/100504.asp

About the author:

Frances Beinecke, NRDC President: NRDC is the nation's most effective environmental action organization. We use law, science and the support of 1.2 million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

http://www.nrdc.org/

Filed Under: BREAKING NEWS, ENVIRONMENT, Health and Fitness, Lifestyle, PRESS RELEASE

RUSH PR NEWS newswire and press release services at rushprnews.com / AH Marketing ahmarketinggroup.com

Content- Legal Responsibility - All material is copyrighted - You may repost but you MUST link back to the original post on your page and acknowledge Rush PR News as the news source. Rush PR News is not legally and/or morally responsible for content of press releases, opinions expressed or fact-

checking.

Rush PR News cannot be held legally responsible for material published and distributed through its newswire service or published in its press-room and therefore cannot be sued for published material. Third-party must be contacted directly to dispute content.

Rush PR News is not the contact for material published.