COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON
HIGHLY HAZARDOUS PESTICIDES
Organized by the SAICM Secretariat and the University of Cape Town

- Topic: The importance of farmer and farmer organisations’ perspectives on Highly Hazardous Pesticides
- Date: 12 December 2022
- Time: 10h00 – 11h30 (GMT + 2)
- Presenters: Andrew Ardington, Regenerative Agriculture Association of Southern Africa and Professor Hanna-Andrea Rother (University of Cape Town)
- Facilitator: Professor Hanna-Andrea Rother (University of Cape Town)

Introduce yourself (name, job title, organization and country) in the chat section.
Only the presenter and facilitator will speak. Any comments or questions from attendees should be typed in the chat section.

Please kindly keep your microphone muted and cameras off during the discussion.

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This activity is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).
The Key Role of SAICM Focal Points in Reducing Harm from Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Highly Hazardous Pesticides Community of Practice

Andrew Ardington (Regenerative Agriculture Association of Southern Africa)

Prof. Hanna-Andrea Rother (University of Cape Town)

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What are Highly Hazardous Pesticides?

- Pesticides acknowledged presenting particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems such as WHO or GHS or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered and treated as highly hazardous. (Code)

- 2008 FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPM) established HHP criteria (Box 1).

- A pesticide that meets at least one criterion is considered an HHP.

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**Box 1: FAO/WHO JMPM Criteria for Identifying an HHP**

- **Criterion 1:** Pesticide formulations that meet WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard classes Ia and Iib.
- **Criterion 2:** Active ingredients and formulations meet carcinogenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).
- **Criterion 3:** Active ingredients and formulations meet mutagenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).
- **Criterion 4:** Active ingredients and formulations meet reproductive toxicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).
- **Criterion 5:** Active ingredients listed in Stockholm Convention Annexes A and B, and paragraph 1 of Annex D.
- **Criterion 6:** Active ingredients and formulations listed in the Rotterdam Convention Annex III.
- **Criterion 7:** Pesticides listed under the Montreal Protocol.
- **Criterion 8:** Active ingredients and formulations that have shown a high incidence of severe or irreversible adverse effects on human health of the environment.

Source: FAO/WHO 2016 Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides
Highly Hazardous Pesticides

• Small sub-sector of pesticides extremely toxic to human health and/or environment

• Banned/discontinued for use in many countries

• Alternatives exist

• Globally farmers are shifting away from using HHPs, particularly in HICs
Purpose of Today’s Discussion
Presenter by: Prof Andrea Rother

- National governments make regulatory decisions identifying and removing HHPs from the market
- Farmers implement decision and impacted by decision
- Call to include farmers in conversation
  - “Farmers” not homogeneous; commercial vs small scale farmers
  - How to solicit an unbiased position?
  - CoP starting conversation

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<td>Farmers perspectives on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs)</td>
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Challenges in Organizing Discussion

- Finding farmers
  - Not all websites of the farmer organisations had email addresses
  - Those contacted; none replied

- Language barrier – emails in English

- Time of year (December)

- Feedback received:
  - Farmers do not know about HHP classifications and do not know what a HHP is. T
  - Their voices are very important for the conversation - but if they are asked to comment on things, they have no specialist knowledge which could undermine their value and experience
Question 1 Background
Presenter by: Andrew Ardington

Farmers and Chemicals

Regenerative Agriculture Association of Southern Africa
Why do farmers use dangerous chemicals

- Serious lack of knowledge
- It won’t happen to me
- If it was so dangerous the government would ban it
- There is a gap between exposure and adverse effect
- They have never seen adverse effects personally
Why such denial

- Part of this is human nature
- Part of it is immediate economic needs
- Part is the massive disinformation campaign
- Not thinking twice about using pesticides is much like not thinking twice about smoking
- It's like climate change for your average citizen
Context

- I grew up on a farm that used chemicals
- My current experience is of commercial family farms
- Focus primarily on Conservation Agriculture farmers
- Renowned for their weedicide use
Organisational Influence

- Most farmers are not members of organisations
- Have limited engagements with organisations
- The lines between most organisations and the chemical companies are blurred
- The lines between the chemical companies and government are blurred
Government

• Aside from a few regulations about signs and locked storage rooms there is little in the way of government involvement
• There is little enforcement of existing legislation
• True impact of toxic chemicals are not being taught in our agricultural colleges
• No government extension officers educating farmers
Farmer Awareness

• The only information farmers get comes from chemical sales reps
• The only people talking to farmers have a vested interest in not telling the farmers about the dangers
• I can safely say 95% of farmers could not tell us what HHP stands for, they have never heard of HHP
• Everybody hides behind “If it was so dangerous the government would ban it”
The Farmers

• The best regenerative farmers, who are well versed in cover crops, still use weedicides
• They use them when they get weed problems
• They use them to burn down their cover crops
• This picture is from a farmer who did an experiment of not burning down a section of his field
The Farmers

• For weeds it’s a choice between till or spray, CA farmers believe that tillage is worse for their soil
• I was taught a diluted burn down is much less harmful than tillage to terminate a crop
• The vast majority of farmers believe that they would go out of business if they were unable to use weedicide to control weeds
The Farmers

- Going out of business means
  - Losing your job
  - Losing your house
  - Losing your heritage
  - Failing your family
Change

• They are receiving no education or information on alternative solutions
• No one is funding research experimenting on farming without weedicides
• A good regenerative farmer told me “If anyone can tell me how not to have to put R1,5mil worth of chemicals in my sprayer every year I would, but nobody has.”
Change

- Telling farmers chemicals are dangerous is not going to change their use patterns
- A human rights approach will not change use patterns
- Coming up with economically viable alternatives will
- We have to build roads for farmers to move towards natural farming systems
Regenerative Agriculture

Building Roads
Question 1

In your opinion, what do you think farmers or farmer organisations understand about Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs)? Please provide evidence for your statement.

This question will be discussed for 25 minutes. Please use chat only, mute your microphone, and turn your video off. Thank you!

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How should farmers and farmer organizations be engaged in relation to highly hazardous pesticides?

Traditionally, farmers' field days are organised on-farm. Those invited to farmer field days, include distributor of the product, extension officers, farmer's organisation i.e. Jamaica Agricultural Society and any other interested party including t

- awareness of necessary operator safety measures
- training, awareness raising and enforcement of bans
- South Africa - retailers for commercial and small scale farmers is perhaps the most realistic. But who is providing retailers with the information on hazards and alternatives?
- training and awareness programmes on pesticides and handling

Q1 In the organic sector, many of our farmers are aware of HHPs. We are hoping that this awareness will spread to conventional farmers in the local context. In the PGS network, farmers are encouraged to advocate for the environment.

- It is all about the classification and associated label prescriptions isn't? Its is essential to understand whether -or not these prescriptions can be implemented at national/regional levels by the local farmers.

- Education to farmers. There may not be clear engagement process with small scale farmers who form a large proportion, but don't have formal associations / groupings on which they can be reached.
How should farmers and farmer organizations be engaged in relation to highly hazardous pesticides?

Farmers and the farmer’s Organization should be engaged at all stages and must be aware of HHPs, labelling, laws and regulations both local and international ones.

Farmers field day sponsorship in Jamaica is usually to provide meals. The distributors do sponsor the food but farmers sometimes manage without sponsorship.
Whose role is it to inform farmers and farmer organisations about the risks of HHPs and alternatives to HHPs? Are they the same person/organisation?

- **Industry**
  - Not all the same person/organisation but all the people from regulators, manufactures, suppliers and all who are in the HHPs supply chain

- **Kenya - Regulators / Government agencies, civil society too has a responsibility.**
  - Initially the production manufacturers should provide the proper components, the distributors should be aware of those before providing those to farmers. So the basics starts from the root of the cause. Mainly in developing countries

- **Kenya**
  - The organic sector is making farmers aware of the dangers of pesticides to their soils, their animals and their families.

- **Industry - as well as farmer unions need to work hand in hand to raise awareness and train people to uses pesticides in a responsible manner**
  - The use of the pesticides as well as the dangers of the pesticides can be presented. The Pesticide Control Authority would normally address the need for protective clothing and address a plan to prohibit a pesticides.

- **If farmers are not aware of the dangers, there will be a very high chance that they will develop health issues. Who would ultimately be responsible? CANSA has tried to raise awareness around Glyphosate, but their report is rejected by CropLife**

- **Kenya - Besides the regulators, civil societies, traders, manufacturers and distributors can play a major role in creating**
Whose role is it to inform farmers and farmer organisations about the risks of HHPs and alternatives to HHPs? Are they the same person/organisation?

- Pesticides Authority in Jamaica engage with consumers by way of radio and television advertisement and other public awareness programmes.

- Extension and crop protection authorities, in collaboration with industry and NGOs.

- In the case of an island, the borders can be controlled by working with customs officers.

- The government that collects fees from industry are obligated to do a good job to help steward products.

- In addition to the leading role by the SAICM Focal points, NGOs have a strong role. For example, in Armenia, AWHHE is conducting trainings, developing information materials in national language.
Question 2 Background
Question 2

From your perspective, why do farmers use Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) in your country? List your country in your response.

This question will be discussed for 25 minutes. Please use chat only, mute your microphone, and turn your video off.

Thank you!

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Should policy makers have public consultation with farmers before phasing out an HHP?
Should government’s subsidize alternatives to HHPs during the phaseout period of an HHP? Are they the same person/organisation?
Question 3

Do you have experiences of farmers transitioning from HHPs to alternatives (e.g., agronomic practices) or alternative crop protection products? Can you describe these?

This question will be discussed for 25 minutes. Please use chat only, mute your microphone, and turn your video off. Thank you!

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<th>Response</th>
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<td>South Africa</td>
<td>sufficient - no. There is also the assumption that pesticides are cheap and alternatives are expensive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>not very sure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>not sure. This indicates the need for the government agencies / regulators to collaborate. Food safety entrusted with Ministry of Health while food security with Ministry of Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Yes, in Tanzania there are a sufficient range of crop protection products available, however, most of them are not highly used and we still don’t have a database of those crop production products.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>In Armenia (according to HHP Report by AWHHE, supported by IPEN, 2020) problems include: product not labeled as IPM; The policy framework for IPM not developed; lack of knowledge &amp; interest from farmers; lack of consumer awareness &amp; demand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Not in Caribbean countries. Currently trying to identify and document information on alternatives together with NGOs, agricultural research and academia. It is a slow process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Yes, but they are all poisonous. Registration of organic inputs is being hindered by CropLife in South Africa. Grow the soil and your plant will be healthy. This requires practical skills transfer.</td>
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**Note:** The response for South Africa indicates that there is a lack of sufficient crop protection products available and that the assumption is that pesticides are cheap and alternatives are expensive. The response for Kenya highlights the need for government agencies and regulators to collaborate on food safety and food security, respectively. The response for Tanzania suggests that while there is a sufficient range of crop protection products, they are not highly used and there is a lack of a database of these products. The response for Armenia points out various challenges including product labeling, policy framework development, and consumer awareness. The response for the Caribbean states that they are not currently using HHPs and are working on identifying and documenting alternative methods. The response for South Africa also mentions the importance of practical skills transfer.
What other issues are key to address to support farmers and farmer organisations in your country to stop reliance on HHPs?

Try to involve them as much as possible in all decisions that have been made and which are going to be implemented in the future.

The Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) only offers a package of support for farmers that consists of GMO seed, fertilizer and pesticides. No alternatives available.

There should be policies that help the farmers and proper evaluation after the implementation of policies.

the question of readily available and easy to implement alternative practices and products

Need to address industry misinformation - often the only source of info on pesticides that farmers have. Obvious conflict of interest

Clear set of steps: 1. Identify HHPs in use. 2. Find out which ones are causing most harm. - Prioritise them for removal.
3. Identify alternatives (focus on IPM and agroecology) that work.
4. Support farmers to adopt them - Training, Training, Training.

1. Viable cost-effective alternatives
2. Cases where HHPs are sometimes used especially on minor crops due to lack of alternatives; need to address dearth of information on MRLs.
What value have you gained from this and other HHP CoP discussions? (Check all that apply)

- Being part of a community of others doing similar work: 4
- Support for my efforts to draft, implement or enforce HHP guidance documents: 1
- Learned information to help me identify alternatives to HHPs: 0
- Explored and exchanged information on HHPs along their lifecycle: 1
- I did not get value from any HHP CoP discussions: 1
- Other (list in chatroom): 0
THANK YOU for attending the LAST Highly Hazardous Pesticides CoP Discussion for 2022!

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