



GreenCAP

green decade

COALITION / NEWTON
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*1990 - 2000 ...a decade
to make a difference!*

GreenCAP is the Green Decade Coalition's Committee for Alternatives to Pesticides. Our mission is to protect our health and the environment by promoting safe ecological approaches to landscaping and pest control.

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FACT: 27 chemicals listed by the US EPA as "inerts of unknown toxicological concern" are on the Toxic Release Inventory list under the Superfund hazardous waste cleanup law because of their toxicity or environmental effects.

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WHAT IS YOUR PESTICIDE IQ?

1. The term "pesticide" refers to:
a. insecticides b. herbicides c. fungicides
d. rodenticides e. All of the above.
2. Pesticides registered with the EPA are safe. *True or False?*
3. Inert ingredients are harmless. *True or False?*
4. Most pesticides are NEVER tested. *True or False?*

ANSWERS

1e. All of the above. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) regulates all substances intended to kill, control or repel pests. Wood preservatives and disinfectants are also regulated under FIFRA.

2. False. Federal registration is not based on health and safety criteria. Frequently, the information used to make safety judgments is supplied by or heavily influenced by the manufacturers of these products. According to the EPA, registered pesticides should not be characterized as "safe" even when applied according to the product label. EPA regulations prohibit pesticide manufacturers and distributors from making safety claims for their products such as "safe", "non-toxic" "EPA approved" or "environmentally friendly."

3. False. *Inert* does not mean biologically, chemically or toxicologically inactive. Inert ingredients are simply some of the 1,820 "other" ingredients that do not specifically effect the target pest. "Inerts" can include solvents, propellants, preservatives, emulsifiers and surfactants. Inerts can account for over 90 percent of a given pesticide formulation. Some are more toxic than the active ingredients listed on the label.

For example, a study in the journal, *Lancet*, found that the surfactant POEA, in the herbicide Roundup, is three times more acutely toxic than the active ingredient, glyphosate. Manufacturers claim that the use of these ingredients are trade secrets and therefore the identity of inerts is not available to the public nor, in many cases, to the EPA.

4. True. Required health and environmental studies had been completed for only 47 of 613 eligible groups of active pesticide ingredients as of October, 1993. EPA can waive all chronic toxicity testing for non-agricultural use pesticides. Many pesticides may never be tested for chronic health effects. EPA does not require that pesticides be tested for potential effects on the immune system. Pesticides are not tested for synergistic or cumulative effects. Little is known about the effects of pesticides when they are combined with other pesticides or other substances such as inert ingredients or prescription drugs.



Information is based on articles in the *Journal of Pesticide Reform* and other publications of the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP).

