

Pesticides Awareness Week 2012

21st – 27th October, 2012

The Ministry of Agriculture, Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board continued its public awareness raising campaign with the observation of “Pesticides Awareness Week” during Agriculture Month 2012. The Board which monitors the import, distribution, vending, use, storage and disposal of pesticides in Guyana carried out a number of activities during the week to raise awareness about this unique group of chemicals.

Pesticides are the only toxic substances released intentionally into our environment to kill living things. This includes substances that kill weeds (herbicides), insects (insecticides), fungus (fungicides), rodents (rodenticides), among others.

The use of toxic pesticides to manage pest problems has become a common practice in Guyana and around the world. Pesticides are used almost everywhere -- not only in agricultural fields, but also in homes, parks, schools, buildings, forests, and roads. It is difficult to find somewhere where pesticides aren't used -- from the can of bug spray under the kitchen sink to the airplane crop dusting acres of farmland; our world is filled with pesticides.

Pesticides have been linked to a wide range of human health hazards, ranging from short-term impacts such as headaches and nausea to chronic impacts like cancer, reproductive harm, and respiratory failure.

Acute dangers - such as nerve, skin, and eye irritation and damage, headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue and systemic poisoning - can sometimes be dramatic, and even occasionally fatal. Chronic health effects may occur years after even minimal exposure to pesticides in the environment, or result from the pesticide residues which we ingest through our food.

Pesticides are currently considered valuable and necessary to provide sufficient quantity of quality foods for the world's population. However, the protection of man and his essential needs such as water, air, food and protection from pesticides which are potentially dangerous, is in the public interest now and in the future. Therefore it is deemed necessary to provide for the management of pesticides, throughout its lifecycle.

Pesticides management in Guyana aims to alleviate the dangers associated with pesticides used in food production, ensuring food safety and protecting the lives of consumers and pesticides users. The Board will continue to strengthen public awareness activities in light of the growing concern about pesticides and its negative impact on human health and environment.