



The Devil You Don't Agrobusiness' Dirty Little Secrets

We are living at a time when, for those of us lucky enough to live in developed countries, the food supply is plentiful, reliable, inexpensive relative to our incomes, and basically nutritious and safe. The *immediate* dangers of malnutrition, unclean water, or the kinds of toxins found in fungus-laden, unrefrigerated foods are something that North Americans don't even pause to think about when we bite into an apple or butter a slice of bread. Yet ever since Rachel Carson's seminal 1962 book *Silent Spring*, environmentalists and health-conscious people have realized that they have reason to fear the *long-term* impacts of some of the synthetic chemicals routinely dumped on the crops that end up as food on our tables.

The single biggest concern has been pesticides. Carson's book highlighted the impacts on reproductive function of the organochlorine pesticide DDT (1,1 bis (p-chlorophenyl) 2,2,2 trichloroethane), and that information was instrumental in creating a movement that would lead to the banning of this chemical in nearly all of the developed world.

Most people's biggest concern about pesticides – that they may initiate or promote cancer – has proved the most difficult to conclusively prove in humans;¹ even major pesticide-driven problems which are known to be occur in other species (such as endocrine disruption²) have only been definitively shown to also happen in people in a few cases. And the chief concern with **genetically-modified organisms (GMOs)** is *precisely* the lack of testing, leaving their ultimate impact on human and environmental health unknown and unpredictable.

Between the ambiguities in the science, and the massive lobbying and PR efforts of transnational corporate interests, environmentalists have had a hard time pushing for the kind of regulations most of us believe are necessary to protect our health. The basic precautionary principle — that *no one should be unwillingly exposed to a chemical which hasn't been proven safe* — has yet to come into its own as a basis for government action, much less for corporate responsibility.

But what if industry were being allowed to openly, routinely lace the soil in which our food is grown with substances whose toxicity is not disputed by *anyone*? What if, in addition to the *known* ingredients in pesticides, our food crops were being dosed with *other* chemicals that the pesticide makers don't even have to list on their labels? How would you feel if you knew that “tests”

reported in widely-reprinted news stories, supposedly showing that conventional produce is free of pesticides, turned out to have *never been done*? Or if chemicals which have *already* been banned as hazardous were secretly being applied to our food anyway?

What if these aren't rhetorical questions?

Farms as Toxic Waste Dumps

By analyzing data at the US Environmental Protection agency,³ researchers with the Environmental Working Group (EWG) made the alarming discovery that **fertilizer companies are allowed to routinely add incinerator ash and other industrial wastes to their product** – as a “mineral” source.⁴ The researchers were able to “follow the money” – or, in this case, the poison – from its industrial sources (which ranged from steel mills to chemical producers) to the fertilizer companies (top names for the bottom of the barrel: Phibro-Tech of Santa Fe Springs, California; the Old Bridge Chemical Company of New Jersey; and Alabama's Frit Industries) and in some cases, to what appear to be the actual farms (which received 22.5 million pounds of the stuff directly).

Add it all up, and something like 600 American companies, in 44 different US states, sent a total of over 270 million pounds of industrial waste to 450 fertilizer



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companies and apparent farming operations over a five-year period.

As industry representatives are quick to point out,⁵ much of this waste transfer *does* go to operations engaged in legitimate

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recycling activities, allowing industry to inexpensively dispose of its byproducts while creating a genuinely useful fertilizer for conventional agriculture – a product whose content of toxins is no worse than the soil to which it is applied. But while the practice does create some such products, many of the resulting “fertilizers” are outrageously rich in heavy metals and other contaminants. Any claims that the true *toxics* in this material would be filtered out before it would be spread on the fields of America were obliterated when the EWG, along with the California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG), published tests showing that **many agricultural and home fertilizers contained heavy metal contaminants at levels which would classify them as toxic waste** under state guidelines.⁶

Ironite, a common home fertilizer (illegal in Canada and a growing list of US states, fortunately), was one of the worst examples. The researchers picked up samples of Ironite at home and garden supply stores in five different California communities, and sent them off for analysis at an accredited, independent laboratory. The testing lab found **lead** at an average of 3.7 times the concentration that would classify the “fertilizer” as hazardous waste under state law. The legal limits for **arsenic** were exceeded in *all* samples, in some cases by *double* the legal limit, and nearly a third of samples equaled or exceeded the hazardous waste criteria for **mercury** (with an additional *half* of the samples coming in just barely below the maximum boundary point).

A further analysis of 250 commercial fertilizers, performed using data from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, revealed that **one in six products mostly intended for farm use exceeded hazardous waste criteria for cadmium, lead, or arsenic**. And in an extreme case, reported in an award-winning article series in the *Seattle Times*,⁷ **an uranium-processing plant in Gore, Oklahoma was found to be disposing of low-level radioactive waste by labeling it**

as a “**liquid fertilizer**.” The material was sprayed over more than 3600 hectares of grazing land.

In response to the EWG/CALPIRG report and the *Seattle Times* story, many American states are now scrambling to create legislation limit heavy metal and other contaminants in fertilizers. Unfortunately, none of the proposed bills go as far as health and consumer advocacy groups would like them to. Canada, on the other hand, has had such legislation in place for many years.

But that doesn't mean that Canadians can therefore wander uncritically down the produce aisles. After all, **Canadians typically get much of their produce from south of the border throughout the winter months**, and some specific crops – such as oranges – are *only* available as imports. And while Canada has established limits on heavy metals in *fertilizers*, it has only established “guidelines” for such poisons in *foods*: decisions on whether to remove products which exceed “guideline” levels are left to the discretion of Health Canada on a case-by-case basis.

The Secret Formula in ...

Full-disclosure food labelling has become a major issue with health-conscious people. A core focus of concern has been on relatively novel food issues, such as GMO ingredients, the use of **recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST)** in the cattle from which we get our milk, or (ever since the eruption of **bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)**, or “mad cow disease”) in Britain, and the link to human cases of **new variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (nvCJD)**) the nation of origin of beef products.

But in all these cases, we assume that, even if *we* don't know what's in the food we eat, at least the *producers* will. Farmers, at any rate, must know with *which* chemicals they inundate their crops. Right?

Believe it or not, the answer, by law, is *no*.

It turns out that **pesticide producers are not required under law to disclose all the ingredients in their product**. Under labeling laws,⁸ a pesticide must list only its



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“active” ingredients. The catch: ingredients are classified as either “inert” (“formulants” in Canada) or “active” ingredients on the basis of whether it targets the *specific bug* for which the spray is marketed.

So if a company markets a pesticide for (say) Boll weevils, and it contains a substance not known to harm these critters, but which *does* wipe out slugs or ladybugs, then the company does *not* have to disclose that ingredient's presence! As an example, the EPA notes that “isopropyl alcohol may be an active ingredient and antimicrobial pesticide in some products; however, in other products, it is used as a solvent and may be considered an inert ingredient. The law does not require inert ingredients to be identified by name and percentage on the label...”

The EPA is now requesting, but not requiring, the listing of “inert” ingredients on product labels;⁸ Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency is proposing bans on the use of some ingredients as “formulants,” and requiring the listing of others on the label,^{8a} but presently the proposal remains under review.

Activate Your Vitamins



Vitamins are nutrients found in the diet and essential to health. But many vitamins don't come in the diet in the form in which the body finally uses them. These vitamins need to be metabolized by the body into **active coenzyme forms** before their biological potential is unleashed. *To use these vitamins, your body must "activate" them first.*

But what if you get plenty of these vitamins in your diet, but your body doesn't do a good job of "activating" them for you?

Vitamin B3 (niacin or niacinamide) is really just the precursor to the molecule with true biological activity: **NADH**. It's **NADH** that is the body's high-energy intermediate, taking electrons locked up in your food and shuttling them into the heart of your mitochondrial furnaces to release their energy. Without **NADH**, the body's energy factories are like a car with a tank full of gas, a functioning motor ... and dead spark plugs.

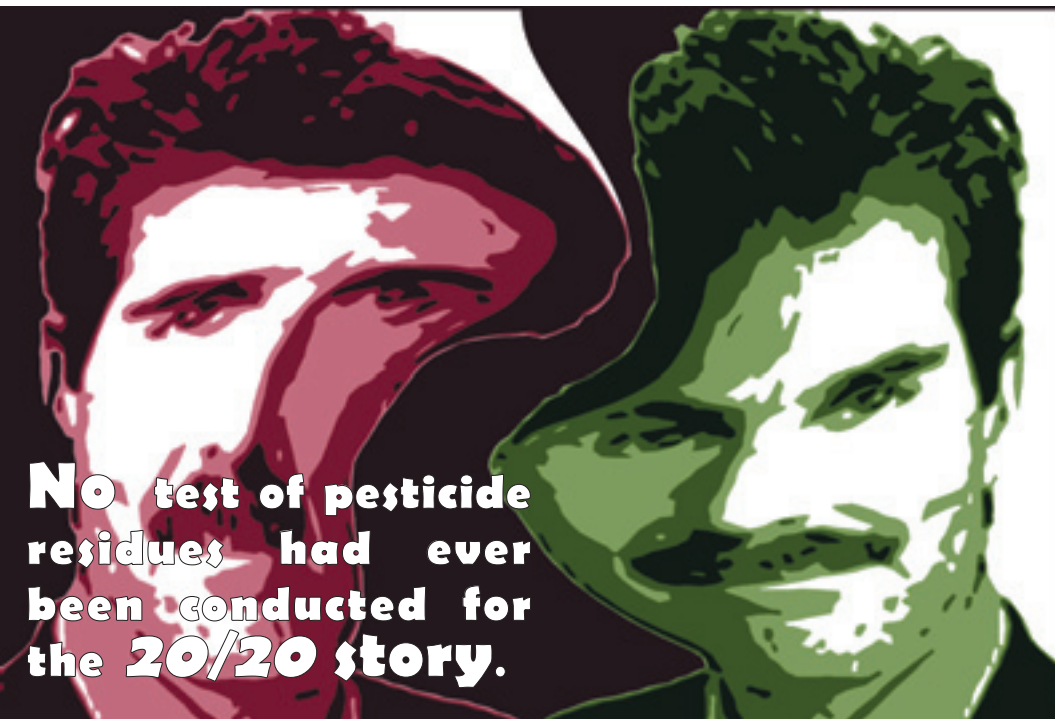
Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid) doesn't do anything itself. Instead, it must be *converted* into **coenzyme A (CoA)**, a coenzyme needed to route fatty acids *into* energy production, and *away from* the synthesis of cholesterol. And the weak link in the chain which connects the **pantothenic acid** in your B-complex to **CoA** in your cells is **Pantethine**. By jumping to the front of the metabolic queue, studies show that directly taking **Pantethine** supplements helps support healthy cholesterol balance.

Not just vitamins... the next step up.

For more information on this, or any other, Holistic International product, please talk to your local health food store -- or have them contact us.



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No test of pesticide residues had ever been conducted for the 20/20 story.

20/20's "No Pesticide" Bluff

In February of last year, a 20/20 story was aired which claimed that, not only was organic produce not *safer* than the equivalent agrobusiness products, but that organic food, in fact, was *more dangerous* to your health than the conventional stuff. This claim was supposedly backed by studies on organic and conventional produce performed for the show, allegedly showing that neither organic *nor* conventional foods contained any pesticide residues ... and that organic food was high in potentially killer *E. coli* bacteria.⁹

The organic industry immediately noted that the latter claim was nearly meaningless. While anyone not living on a deserted island with no media link will surely recall the deadly outbreak of killer *E. coli* strains in Walkerton, Ontario last year, or any of several such eruptions in beef (including the infamous miniplague at "Jack-in-the-Box" restaurants in the Northwestern United States), these outbreaks were not the result of the simple presence of *E. coli* in food or water. After all, we live with a digestive system full of these bacteria every day of our lives, and small children consume significant amounts of fecal *E.*

coli through much of their early years.

It's not just *any* "*E. coli*" which threatens human health in poorly-maintained water systems or improperly-cooked beef, but specific, killer strains of the bug, such as **enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (O157:H7)**. From a public safety perspective, a "generic" test for the simple presence *E. coli* is quite meaningless: a *specific* test for the *pathogenic* strains must be performed to see if the food is genuinely contaminated with a potential killer, as the USDA confirmed in writing after the 20/20 story aired.^{9a} To simply test for the presence or absence of *E. coli* bacteria in produce – as was done for the story – provides no information about the safety of the food, contrary to reporter John Stossel's claim that the tests showed that organic produce "could kill you."

The show's executive producer was informed of all of this, fully *three months* before the show aired.

It was broadcast anyway ... and *rebroadcast* two additional times.

And what about those pesticide residues? Millions of tonnes of pesticides are poured

onto conventional crops every year. And many modern pesticides **bioaccumulate**: stored in the fatty tissues of plants and animals, they are build up over time rather than being flushed out. Every year, the USDA documents that pesticide residues *are* present on conventional produce, giving exact data on how much of each of a list of insecticides is present in the food.¹⁰

Where had all these pesticides gone? Was something wrong with the test? Were the scientists incompetent? Did they test for the right substances? Was their equipment faulty?

None of the above. Instead, what finally emerged, after the show had been rebroadcast twice and the organic industry had repeatedly pressed Mr. Stossel to release the results of his "study," was that *the study never existed*. While the 20/20 study had indeed measured levels of "generic" *E. coli*, **no test of pesticide residues had ever been conducted for the 20/20 story**. Mr. Stossel either failed, negligently, to check his sources – and continued in his negligence through six months of demands for proper documentation for his claims – or fabricated the story from whole cloth.

Both Mr. Stossel¹¹ and ABC¹² have now admitted this much: no pesticide residue testing was ever performed. Stossel's "apology" over the matter¹¹ was half-hearted at best, and at worst tended to reinforce many of the misleading claims of the original story.

One is reminded of the ongoing propagation, mostly by an industry front group called the **American Council on "Science" and "Health" (ACSH)**, of the *sheer propaganda* that the ban on the pesticide **alar** was not based on sound science, and has somehow been disproven — when in fact no new evidence which invalidates the ban has been presented, and a National Academy of Sciences report, published years *after* the original public outcry, reinforced the public's concerns about childhood pesticide exposure.¹³

The bigger picture



Banned ... But Still In the Food!

Proving that a pesticide causes harm to people can be a difficult task. Again, the precautionary principle may call upon us to ban a substance on the basis of *probable* harm, even if definitive proof on the subject is still not available. But once science *has* determined that a chemical poses a real threat to humans, and government responds to public pressure by making its use illegal, we expect that we don't have to worry about it any more: the science is in, the fight has been fought, the law is on the books, and that should be that.

So why is a known, banned human neurotoxin still being found in your food?

Organophosphates are a class of chemicals developed early in the Nazi era by German scientists, who found them deadly – first to lab rodents, and then to bugs. These chemicals kill because they are deadly neurotoxins. After first developing them for use as insecticides, Hitler's scientists adapted the same chemistry to formulate the **Zyklon-B**, which was used in the "final solution" gas chambers. The nerve gas dumped into Tokyo subway stations by **Aum Shinrikyo** cult devotees was likewise an organophosphate.

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), signed into law in 1996, was designed to protect children from the hazards of toxic pesticides, after an alarm was sounded on childhood pesticide exposure by a 1993 report by the National Academy of Sciences entitled *Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children*.¹³ In doing the research

required of them by the law, EPA scientists concluded that childrens' exposure to two organophosphate pesticides – **Guthion (azinphos-methyl)** and **methyl parathion** – was far in excess of any reasonable safety limit, and that the latter chemical was the most potentially dangerous pesticide in the American food supply. Accordingly, on August 29, 1999, the EPA banned the major food uses of methyl parathion,¹⁴ and "restricted" the use of Guthion.

When 25 bags of Washington State apples, purchased at four major US grocery chains over the course of five months of the winter of 200-2001, were tested for pesticide levels,¹⁵ it was found that **eighty-four percent contained pesticide contaminants**. This is hardly surprising in conventionally-grown produce, of course. But the shocker came when levels of *organophosphates* were tested. **Sixty-eight percent of the apples tested positive for**

sense that much of the crop which appeared on store shelves in the winter would already have been sprayed by the time the EPA moved to ban methyl parathion; most probably, the levels of this neurotoxin found in the apples would largely have been due to "leftovers" from an early spray. But even if agrobusiness were to halt the use of methyl parathion altogether – as American law now requires them to do – there is nothing to stop American apple growers from continuing to soak their apples in any of the *other* organophosphates which are still legally squirted over fruit and vegetables, and which were also found to be present on more than two bags of apples in three.

And indeed, the *total* organophosphate levels were high enough in two bags of apples that **a two-year old child eating less than one of the apples in the bag would exceed the maximum safe exposure**

level set by the the EPA. In three bags, levels were high enough that this safety limit would be broken by eating *less than an apple and a half*.

It was thus with great relief that we learned that Canadian law has banned methyl parathion for all agricultural uses since 1953. However, just as in the United States, many *other* organophosphate pesticides are still legally present in our food supply.



Sixty-eight percent of the apples tested positive for these known neurotoxins, including Guthion (56%)... and methyl parathion (8%).

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Poison Packaging

First there was the poisoning of the soil by the fertilizers' heavy metal load. Then there was the poisoning of the produce by toxic pesticides. And finally, if to complete a

Of course, the test is a little "unfair," in the

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cycle, the final, processed consumer food was contaminated by its very *packaging*.

The last year has seen disturbing new revelations about chemicals which are leeching out of plastic packaging into your food.^{16,16a}

One of them (**perfluorooctane sulfonate [PFOS]**) is a key ingredients in Scotchguard,[®] 3M's carpet coating, anti-static, anti-staining material, widely used in making carpets and clothing. However, the *same* chemical is

also used in the packaging of convenience foods, ranging from candy bar wrappers, to cardboard pizza and french fry containers, to the bags which envelop microwave popcorn.

So it's no surprise, ultimately, when you find out that a round of testing in 1997 found that **PFOS was present in every sample of human blood tested, from blood banks around the world.**¹⁶ In fact, according to EPA documents,^{17b} "PFOS has been found ... in manufacturing workers,... non-exposed workers and in blood bank samples. PFOS has also been found in wildlife species across the US (especially in fish eating birds) and in the Baltic in Sweden. It was detected in naive (unexposed) laboratory rats (the PFOS contamination was traced back to fish meal used in the rat chow)."

3M announced, in April of last year, that it would be phasing out PFOS, after finding that it had ben "detected broadly at extremely low levels in the environment and in people" using "[s]ophisticated testing capabilities — some developed in only the last few years".¹⁷ The implication

was that the presence of PFOS in people was news — which it was not. In fact, 3M knew that blood samples taken from the general population appeared to be contaminated with PFOS as early as 1976, and had definitive data no later than 1992.¹⁸



Twelve crops make up over 50% of the total risk from dietary pesticides.

And it's hard to square the EM press release's statement that the presence of PFOS "at these very low levels does not pose a human health of environment risk" with the massive

database of documents in the EPA's file on the subject. The data led EPA scientists to write that **PFOS "appears to combine Persistence, Bioaccumulation, and Toxicity properties to an extraordinary degree"** and that a **"preliminary risk assessment indicated potentially unacceptable margins of exposure (MOEs) for ... the general population."**

In fact, when the same EPA documents declare that PFOS is toxic, and that it "accumulates to a high degree in humans and animals" they are thinking of studies such as the one showing that **many of the the grandchildren of animals exposed to PFOS died prematurely because of their parents' parents' PFOS exposure.**^{17a} As the EPA understatedly notes, "It is very unusual to see such second generation effects."

And while EM phases out PFOS, the US Centers for Disease Control has recently reported that another class of plastic elasticiser (**phthalates**) is present in humans at much higher levels than was previously believed.^{16a} These are the same elasticizing agents which have triggered a

Health Canada advisory because of their ongoing presence in children's toys,^{17c} because of "potential damage to the kidneys and liver." These chemicals are still present in many children's toys despite an explicit 1986 ban, in the United states, on the use of phthalates in items designed to be put in childrens' mouths.^{17c}

Solutions

The most direct solution to this problem, of course, is encapsulated in the title of a recent Canadian bestseller: *Real Food for a Change.*¹⁹ **Organic agriculture**, of course, is the simplest and most direct route to a diet nearly free of these toxic hazards, and also toward a healthier environment for ourselves, farm workers, and the other living things with whom we share the planet.

But many people don't find this simple solution feasible because of the day-to-day realities of their lives. Budgets are tight, and organics are not readily available in many smaller communities. The most important thing for such persons to remember is that an inability to make "perfect" food choices does not prevent one from doing what one can to reduce one's risk. This does *not* mean scrimping on fruits and vegetables: aside from the fact that any other food you eat will also contain these chemicals, it's widely agreed by experts on all sides that **fruits and vegetables are the healthiest foods to include in your diet** — even if they contain trace levels of pesticides.

Instead, start by simply buying the organic foods which *are* available and affordable.

Next, when buying conventional produce, **look for food grown in Canada.** Legislation in this country already bans many of the practices mentioned in this article, so buying domestic produce is good for you and for the environment, as well as for the economy.

Also, while variety in the diet is a key goal, it's good to know that **some specific foods**



Ancient Hormonal Essences



Western science and Ayurvedic tradition “map” the body differently. The Ayurvedic tradition searches for synthesis, seeing mind and body as a whole. Modern science focuses on analysis, breaking complex wholes into measurable parts.

So it is with the body's messenger systems. Where the modern West sees hormones, the ancients saw the *Ojas*, the essences of the Seven Body Tissues (*dhatu*s). Where the moderns' “master gland” is in the brain, the essence of the *dhatu*s was *shukralartav*, the unifying fine energy of the heart.

And where the West has chosen to “top up” the body's hormones like the gas tank of a machine, the Ayurvedic physician seeks to bring the body's energies back in harmony, restoring the balance of the whole system.

Ayurved Formulas joins science and tradition, bringing you formulations which combine Eastern wisdom with the rigors of Western science in its alchemical furnaces.

Acti-Cyclase is a standardized extract of *Coleus forskohlii*, containing 4% forskolin. Forskolin **restores cellular sensitivity to many hormones** by stimulating the activity of the cell's main “second messenger” system.

Tribal Power combines herbs to potently support physical performance. Features standardized *Tribulus terrestris*, an herb shown to **support healthy pituitary hormone activity** and thus the regulation of many hormones, along with hGH-supporting *Mucuna pruriens* and adaptogenic **Ashwagandha**.

Adaptogen is classic Ayurvedic **support for the adrenal glands**, with a synergistic formula to give energy and fight burnout.

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tend to be higher or lower in pesticide residues than others. In fact, according to an analysis of FDA pesticide data,²⁰ when you take into account the *amount*, *variety*, and *toxicity* of pesticides present in foods, **twelve crops make up over 50% of the total risk from dietary pesticides:** strawberries, bell peppers, spinach, *American* cherries, peaches, *Mexican* cantaloupe, celery, apples (surprise!), apricots, green beans, *Chilean* grapes, and cucumbers. At the same time, you can actively choose to eat *more* of those conventional crops with the *least* toxic burden: avocados, corn, onions, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, *American* grapes, bananas, plums, green onions, watermelon, and broccoli.

By choosing to eat more of some fruits and vegetables in place of others, or making the switch to organics for those foods known to be high-risk, you can significantly reduce your toxin load. Also, as can be seen from the above lists, *where* your produce comes from is an important piece of information: American grapes are very safe, while a heavy pesticide burden is present on the same produce from Chile. And by choosing to eat cantaloupe at times of year other than the peak Mexican import season (January through April), you can get maximum enjoyment and nutrition from this fruit, with the least toxin exposure.

Careful food preparation can also help. While the manufacturers of commercial “pesticide removers” have yet to release data showing that their products work, a study performed by the Southwest Research Institute²¹ found that simply **washing produce in extremely dilute dish soap**, combined with normal processing (such as discarding melon rinds and removing carrot tops), results in declines in detectable pesticide residues ranging from 30 to 100 percent! In fact, over half of tested produce bears *no* detectable pesticide residue after this treatment. While washing a pesticide-treated strawberry will not protect farm workers or the environment, it will clearly

go some way toward protecting yourself ... and your family.

Avoiding the purchase of foods packaged in flexible plastic containers such as margarine tubs and squeeze tubes will reduce your body’s burden of PFOS, phthalates, and other toxic elasticizers. This is an especially big concern when the food is rich in fat, because the elasticizers dissolve most easily into lipids, and are thus more likely to leech into cooking oil, tub margarine, or mayonnaise than into ketchup or mustard.

Last, but certainly not least: **write to your Member of Parliament, and to the Minister of Health**, to share any concerns you may have about pesticides and other toxins in your food, and to demand better protection for yourself, your loved ones, and your world.

Write to the Minister of Health
The Honourable Allan Rock
Minister’s Office, Health Canada
Brooke Claxton Bldg., Tunney’s Pasture
AL 0913C
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0K9

Fax: 613-952-1154

minister@www.hc-sc.gc.ca
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/feedback.htm#minister>

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