

FATAL HARVEST FACTS

ON PESTICIDES

According to the U.S. EPA, 112 currently registered pesticides are known, probably, or suspected carcinogens. (p. 249) The overall incidence of childhood leukemia in the United States increased by 27 percent between 1973 and 1990. One National Cancer Institute study found that in homes where pesticides were used just once a week, children's risk of leukemia increased 400 percent. (p 249)

The US Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Data Program found 33 different residues of commercial pesticides or their derivatives in samples of US grown tomatoes in 1999. P. 112

In 1990 the World Health Organization published an estimate that 3 million severe acute pesticide poisonings occur in developing countries a year, including some 220,000 fatalities. P. 251 In the U.S., government estimates indicate more than 20,000 farmworkers suffer acute pesticide poisonings annually. (p. 251)

According to the FDA, at least 53 pesticides classified as carcinogenic are presently applied in massive amounts to our major food crops. P.52

ON ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

In the last 40 years, nearly one-third of the world's arable land has been lost to erosion and continues to be lost at a rate of more than 10 million hectares per year. P. 42

American farmland loses topsoil about 17 times faster than it is formed. Of the 375 million acres in crops, about 30 percent have excessive soil loss (p. 224).

Cornell University researchers estimate that 672 million birds are affected by pesticide use on farmland and 10 percent of these – 67 million – die each year as a result. (p. 61)

ON GENETIC ENGINEERING

Opinion polls consistently show that more than 90 percent of Americans strongly support the labeling of GE foods. A 1999 Time poll revealed that close to 60 percent would avoid such foods if they were labeled. P. 213

Our government requires no mandatory safety testing or labeling of any genetically engineered foods. P. 63

Scientists from Purdue University found that that if just 60 individual genetically-engineered fish were introduced into a population of 60,000 wild fish, the species would become extinct within only 40 generations. (p. 215)

ON LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL DIVERSITY

By the mid-1990's of the 631 species of plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered in the contiguous states, farming was cited as a contributing factor to 42 percent of listed species and grazing and ranching to 26 percent. P. 367

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that 75 percent of genetic diversity in agriculture was lost this past century. P. 18

Approximately 97 percent of the vegetable varieties in 1900 are now extinct. (RAFI, p. 71)

ON FARM SIZE AND LOSS OF FAMILY FARMS

Between 1987 and 1992, America lost an average of 32,500 farms per year, about 80 percent of which were family run. P. 55

163,000 large industrial farms in the US now capture 61 percent of the sales, while 1.3 million farms capture only 9 percent of the sales. P. 91

Since 1950 the average farmer's income has decreased by 32 percent --for every dollar a consumer spends on food, farmers now receive 10 cents or less, compared to anywhere up to 70 cents just a few decades ago. P. 351

The smallest farms – those of 27 acres or less – are more than ten times as productive (in terms of dollar output per acre) than large farms, and small farms of 4 acres or less can be over a hundred times more productive. (p. 60)

ON ORGANIC AND FARMER-DIRECT FOODS

Organic product sales doubled from 1989 to 1994 and now are rising by more than 20 percent a year. P. 339 Organic produce sales in the US increased from \$1 billion in 1990 to \$4 billion in 1997. P. 163

According to a Consumers Union report, 73 percent of conventionally grown foods had residue from at least one pesticide and were six times as likely as organic to contain multiple pesticide residues. (NYT, 5/8/02)

The number of farmer's markets in the U.S. is up from 1,755 in 1994 to more than 2,800 in 2000 according to the USDA. The number of community supported agriculture (CSA) programs has increased from about 50 in 1990 to over 1,000 in 2000. (p. 353)

