

ACT NOW: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP PARAQUAT!

As a farmer: Do not use Paraquat. Inform yourself about non-toxic alternatives and integrated weed control.

As plantation worker: Demand your company to evaluate less toxic alternatives and to provide appropriate protection.

As a plantation manager: Investigate and use non-toxic alternatives. Protect your workers from pesticide exposure.

As a trade union: press the Government to ban Paraquat and call upon plantation owners to stop the use of Paraquat and change to less toxic alternatives.

As NGO: Ask your Government to ban Paraquat, join our coalition. Support workers poisoned with Paraquat in their claims for compensation.

As Government official: Protect your people. Ban Paraquat.

The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is an international federation of trade unions representing workers employed in agriculture and plantations.



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WHAT YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT PARAQUAT

Paraquat is a non-selective herbicide used to kill plants.

The most common trade name is Gramoxone sold by Syngenta.

Users are suffering from headaches, nose-bleeds, impaired vision, shortness of breath, skin injuries, and diarrhea.

There is no antidote. Accidents and suicide attempts are often fatal.

Death from Paraquat poisoning is slow and very painful.

Scientific research shows that Parkinson's disease is associated with Paraquat use.

Use is banned in the European Union and several other countries.

Major foodcompanies like Dole, Chiquita and Lipton have decided to stop the use of Paraquat or have already done so.

STOP PARAQUAT!



« As a representative of my people I ask Syngenta from the bottom of my heart to show some sympathy for our appeal by which we hope to stop the continued poisoning of our women and children and our environment. We would like Syngenta to act responsibly and value the lives, rights, and wellbeing of our women and men who work on the plantations. »



Arjunan, a plantation worker in Malaysia for 33 years.

The call to stop the production and sale of Paraquat is supported by many organizations around the world.

The Berne Declaration coordinates this protest against Syngenta.

For more information go to:
www.stop-paraquat.net

Spanish, French, English and German information available.

Syngenta, the world's largest pesticide company sells and promotes Paraquat despite the knowledge that this deadly pesticide cannot be used properly in many countries.



COUNTLESS VICTIMS

Paraquat poisoning is a major issue in many developing countries, with tens of thousands of poisonings a year.

In several countries, Paraquat ranks first among all pesticide poisonings. Plantation workers using Paraquat complain about:

- sharp abdominal pains,
- headaches, nosebleeds, impaired vision,
- shortness of breath,
- skin injuries, and diarrhea.

Lungs are especially susceptible to long-term damage. Many recent studies also indicate a link between Paraquat and Parkinson's disease. In Germany, Parkinson's has been recognized as an occupational disease of farmers in a number of cases.



A majority of fatal Paraquat incidents are the result of deliberate or accidental ingestion. Since there is no antidote ingestions are usually fatal – a slow and painful death. Easy access of Paraquat promotes abuse and accidents. Both are major reason for a ban in some countries.

WITHOUT PROTECTION

Reasons for the high incidence of poisonings among farmers are the overwhelming lack of adequate protective clothing and damaged spray equipment.

Main reasons for lack of protective clothing:

- farmers are too poor to buy safety gear;
- lack of awareness;
- protective equipment is not available.

In the US, Paraquat could only be mixed and applied by registered users wearing an apron, face shield/eye protection, chemical resistant gloves and a respirator with dust or mist filter – a standard of safety which is not realistic in developing countries. A survey from Syngenta showed that in countries like Bangladesh or the Philippines less than 10% of pesticide users wear the basic protective cloth in such as long trousers, long shirt, shoes.



ONE STORY AMONG THOUSANDS



Marco Tulio, 48, Costa Rica

Marco Tulio was spraying Paraquat on a banana plantation. His spray backpack leaked and the liquid dripped on his arm. After three hours, his arm felt as if it had been burnt and turned red on the inside. He stopped working and took a long shower. The next day, the foreman sent him back to the plantation with the same backpack. Three hours later, overtaken by nausea, abdominal pains, and irritations in the mouth, he was forced to stop once more. The village doctor recommended dressing the wound with toothpaste. When he showed up at the company health service four days later, his arm was covered with blisters. The wound did not heal and he was twice hospitalized for skin transplants. When he returned to work after nine months of sick leave, he was sent to spray Paraquat. He refused and was fired on the spot.

WE CAN DO WITHOUT

In recent years, a number of initiatives were started with the goal of promoting a more sustainable form of agriculture and forestry:

- Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), Rainforest Alliance, UTZ Certified, Forest Stewardship Council, or the Common Code for the Coffee Community – all these labels prohibit the use of Paraquat.
- Global food corporations such as Dole and Chiquita or Nestlé and Lipton in their Tea Production, no longer allow their suppliers to use Paraquat.
- In the 27 countries of the European Union Paraquat may no longer be used because health risks are deemed too high even for users wearing protective gear. Switzerland, Cambodia, the Ivory Coast and others have also banned the use of Paraquat.
- Commercially successful agriculture and forestry is possible without Banana plantation in Costa Rica: Cover crops successfully suppress weeds, making the use of hazardous herbicides unnecessary.



More information about non-chemical alternatives to Paraquat can be found at http://www.pan-germany.org/download/FG_paraquat.pdf