

PARAQUAT AND THE ACTIVISTS

A Briefing to Syngenta Crop Protection by
v-Fluence Interactive Public Relations

November 2002

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Image used on homepage of the Berne Declaration

UNDERSTANDING THE V-FLUENCE APPROACH

IT STARTS ONLINE

Effective and strategic monitoring, response, outreach and inoculation in issues management today start with a solid understanding of the players, their positioning, motivations (funding) and strategies. While virtual, the online world cannot be dismissed as it reflects what is happening in the real world. At the same time, the online environment is an information resource for understanding trends and developing strategic issues-management options for corporations, governments, academia and non-profit groups.

To understand the online environment, v-Fluence starts with an in-depth review of news articles, websites, search-engine categories, online dialogue, field research and interviews to identify key stakeholders (pro, con and neutral) and filters (media and opinion leaders), language used and methods and strategies for communicating messages. We research and analyze leading negative stakeholders and influencers to identify their existing and past issues, positioning, funding, alliances and strategies. At the same time we identify key supportive and neutral stakeholders and supportive available content and finally map out the positioning and impact of that information in the online environment. This provides us with a strategic map that benchmarks the current state of play and opportunities and risks in the areas of e-Real Estate, e-Dialogue and Interactive Tools (1). That is what we have provided you with in this report.

This benchmark research provides a map to identify placement of false or misleading information, vacuums of information and related trends. It provides a key to ongoing, strategic monitoring, enabling an early warning system for emerging concerns.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dating back to the 1970s, when news reports highlighted the U.S. government's use of paraquat to fight Latin American drug producers, paraquat has been under attack by various activist organizations. The leading and early movers on this issue were **NORML** (see below) and several mainstream anti-conventional-agriculture activist groups including Friends of the Earth and the Sierra Club. In fact, even today results for a search of the word "paraquat" in chat rooms and news groups show a high percentage of messages still devoted to the drug issue.

However, during the last fifteen years the focus has shifted to more serious matters and several activist groups (2) have called for an outright ban on ALL uses of the herbicide. Paraquat is attacked for the following reasons, which are revealed by newspaper article analyses and Internet searches:

- **Suicide and accidental poisoning** - Farmers and rural villagers in developing countries who are intent on committing suicide have been known to drink paraquat, which is often reported by the media. Activists have exploited this, claiming, as one wrote, "The responsibility for suicidal use of paraquat rests also on the manufacturer. Unrestricted access to a liquid, of which a very small amount may be fatal, makes a suicidal or parasuicidal decision easy." (3)

Paraquat also gained notoriety in Tokyo, the United Kingdom (4) and other countries when apparent terrorists or disturbed individuals used it to poison supermarket foods and drinks, and in Hawaii when it was used to kill dogs. Despite industry efforts to prevent accidents by adding emetics, stenching agents and dyes to the herbicide, a number of people are reported each year to die by mistakenly drinking paraquat - which is also exploited by activists who present it in studies, publications and online. (5)

- **Parkinson's disease** - A number of reports have claimed that exposure to paraquat, especially in combination with other chemicals, *may* increase chances of acquiring Parkinson's disease. Activists have used this issue in their attacks by broadcasting these claims via listservs, websites and chat rooms. (6) (For example, Soil and Health Association of New Zealand, the PANNA site and the Pest Management at the Crossroads site (7), run by Charles Benbrook, an anti-pesticide activist and organic industry consultant, all reference the link between Parkinson's and paraquat.)
- **Farm worker safety** - Perhaps the point most often made by activists (certainly in the past few years) is that farm laborers in developing countries are exposed to dangerous amounts of the herbicide. Activist organizations especially like to exploit and exaggerate claims that paraquat has been banned in certain developed countries and that its use is restricted in others - even as western manufacturers continue to produce and export it to the developing world. These groups dismiss programs designed to encourage the safe use of the product by implementing protective clothing, training, etc. Instead, they are calling for a worldwide ban on paraquat and eleven other chemicals they have labeled the "Dirty Dozen." (8)

Reports from activist organizations often play on the emotional factor (9) of this issue, offering stories and images of health problems experienced by farm workers.

- **The environment** - Some reports have indicated that paraquat may be a factor in mutations observed in frogs and tadpoles. Predictably, activists have funded and promoted these reports in many of their publications, both in print and online. The Pesticide Action Network (PAN) even expanded this list to include other animals: "[Paraquat] has been shown to have acute or chronic effects on frogs, fish, mice, birds, horses, bees and other insects."

Paraquat is also portrayed as a groundwater pollutant by PAN and other groups:

"Studies have found that **paraquat** bound to soil particles can be carried into water or made airborne as dust, where it may be ingested or inhaled by humans or animals. Additionally, one of **paraquat's** degradates, QINA, is only loosely adsorbed to soil, and therefore is a potential groundwater contaminant."

Or, as Marc Lappe, activist and author of books such as "Chemical Deception : The Toxic Threat to Health & the Environment" and "Against the Grain : Biotechnology & the Corporate Takeover of Your Food," wrote in 1990 while supporting California's Big Green ballot initiative:

Pollutants from agricultural and industrial sources are contaminating ground water and deep aquifers. A total of 65 different pesticides have been uncovered in ground water supplies. Some 600 million lbs. of pesticides are sold in California annually. Pesticides such as simazine and atrazine have penetrated the water system of the Central Valley. And soil sterilizants such as dibromochloropropane (DBCP) have contaminated 2,500 wells, pushing many towns in the agricultural regions to sue for entire new water supplies ... So it goes with other pesticides health professionals want "off the list": benomyl, toxaphene, chlordimeform, "DEF," folex, **paraquat** -- just to name a few. These include teratogenic (causing birth defects) or carcinogenic chemicals that would be suspended if the Big Green initiative passed.

- **Cancer** - Pesticides as carcinogens is a common activist claim. Reports are circulated by the activist media (for example, "Sharp Rise in Cancer Linked to Pesticide" (10) by Inter Press, an article which mentions paraquat) and online chatrooms, listservs and newsgroups such as Google Groups. (11)

HISTORY OF PARAQUAT AND ACTIVISTS

The following is a brief history of various activist campaigns against paraquat over the last three decades.

Activist group attacks on paraquat date back to the 1970s, when the US government began using it as a defoliant on marijuana and opium fields in Mexico and South America, (12) causing panic among drug users who deemed it a health risk. The **National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML)**, (13) a marijuana-legalization advocacy organization, led the attack by filing a lawsuit against the government in 1978 with help from diverse groups such as the Yippies and the Playboy Foundation. However, spraying continued into the 1980s and was expanded into several US states including Florida, Georgia, Oregon, Texas and Kentucky.

During this period, health-risk reports near farming areas began surfacing (14) in the Washington Post and other publications, with claims that paraquat and other chemicals were the cause of chest pains, headaches and other ailments. In 1979, Suzanne Prosnier, who claimed her family had suffered from these chemicals, helped form the short-lived **People's Environmental Organization for Pesticide Legislation and Enforcement**. The same year, the Associated Press reported that paraquat drifts from crops dusters were responsible for the deaths of birds and trees in addition to human illnesses. (15)

In 1982 paraquat again gained media attention as the first lung transplant operation was performed on a patient whose **"lungs were destroyed by the herbicide paraquat"** (Washington Post, 1982). The herbicide gained further notoriety as a lung contaminant that year when a jury awarded \$135,000 to a gardener who claimed it damaged his lungs.

More mainstream pro-organic, anti-conventional agriculture activist groups joined the anti-paraquat campaign in 1983. The **National Coalition against the Misuse of Pesticides, Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club** and **North Georgia Citizens Opposed to Paraquat Spraying** joined NORML in filing suits against spraying marijuana fields in the US.

In 1984, stories from Malaysia (16) began appearing about worker safety and paraquat - the most widely used pesticide - and its effects on unprotected farm workers, quoting **Friends of the Earth Malaysia** and the **Consumers Association of Penang**. Western activists led by PAN also began stepping up efforts to ban pesticides worldwide by demonstrating against pesticide manufacturers and exporters to Third World countries.

1985 was perhaps the most important year, when the **Pesticide Action Network (PAN)**, "an international coalition of about 300 environmental and consumer groups," launched the first worldwide campaign against pesticides, (17) with the participation of **Greenpeace, Oxfam, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation** and a number of Third-World organizations. This campaign focused on 12 pesticides it dubbed "The Dirty Dozen," (8) one of which was paraquat.

In 1986, two reports were released in Ottawa to coincide with U.N. "Environment Day" and a "Fate of the Earth" conference that drew some 800 representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations. The **Consumers Union** (publisher of Consumer Reports) released a report by Michael Hansen (a noted anti-biotech, anti-chemical writer) called "Escape from the Pesticide Treadmill," and Tery Gips of the **International Institute for Sustainable Agriculture** released "Alternatives to Twelve Hazardous Pesticides." Paraquat and the rest of the "Dirty Dozen" were

criticized, with Oxfam releasing data which purported that "at least 750,000 people are poisoned by pesticides each year, about 14,000 of them fatally." (18)

In the early 1990s, stories continued to come from developing countries such as Costa Rica, Brazil, and the Philippines about the dangers of paraquat and other pesticides for farm workers. Typically, the fact that paraquat had been banned in many European countries was pointed out and the term "Dirty Dozen" was used. The source of many of these articles was **Inter Press Service**, an NGO operating as an independent news agency.

In 1991, the **Rainforest Alliance** began its ECO-OK certification program for bananas in Costa Rica, discouraging unsafe pesticide use.

In 1992 the **Fairtrade Foundation** incorporated with the support and funding of **Christian Aid**, **CAFOD**, **New Consumer**, **Oxfam**, **Traidcraft Exchange**, and the **World Development Movement**. The Fairtrade Foundation, established to help farm workers through better wages and working conditions, advocates organic farming and discourages paraquat use on bananas and other crops. In fact, Fairtrade's Standard for Bananas (19) specifically states that pesticides in the Pesticide Action Network's "Dirty Dozen" list cannot be used. Fairtrade's promotion of organic farming by denigrating traditional farming practices, such as herbicide use, is similar to activist aims. The Foundation is a favorite among organic activists, who often work in conjunction with Fairtrade and support their campaigns.

Also in 1992, **Tenaganita**, a Malaysian NGO, and **PAN Asia Pacific (PAN AP)** released a report on farm workers and chemicals called 'Victims Without Voice,' which was sent to government agencies. The report was part of their "Women and Pesticides" (20) campaign.

In 1993, a PAN campaign - "the biggest in three decades" - was launched against paraquat. Paraquat manufacturer ICI answered with newspaper advertisements called "Paraquat for a Greener Malaysia." (21) These ads however were quickly and severely attacked by PAN and other groups. (22)

In 1994, the **Fairtrade Mark** was launched for chocolate, later to be expanded to coffee, cocoa, tea, honey and bananas. The Fairtrade Mark - two black interlocking F's on a white background - are given to products "which meet internationally recognised standards of fair trade." The US branch of Fairtrade, TransFair USA -- an organization with activist ties from birth -- was also established that year. (More below)

In 1995, Greenpeace and PAN pressed for a global ban of all persistent organic pollutants, (23) demanding that western countries cease export of the Dirty Dozen chemicals. The campaign was timed to coincide with the UNEP Intergovernmental Conference for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, Oct. 23-Nov. 3, Washington, D.C.

Another significant event occurred that year in Vancouver, Canada when representatives from 40 countries met to discuss **Persistent Organic Pesticides (POPs)**. NGO participants, including representatives of Pesticide Action Network Asia/Pacific, Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature and others claimed that POPs were being found in Arctic Canada and that this was "proof" that they were contaminating nature on a global scale.

In 1996 **Greenpeace** published a report about "unacceptable working conditions" on Malaysian rubber and palm plantations, which again called for a worldwide ban on paraquat. Later that year, 100 organizations - including **Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)** and PAN - criticized the World Bank during the U.N. World Food Summit for its "lax" pesticide guidelines. And the **Consumers Association of Penang (CAP)** took a survey showing that 88 per cent of the farmers interviewed said they often increase the concentration of the pesticides they use beyond the safety limit recommended by the manufacturer.

In 1997, **Southeast Asian Information Network**, a rights group based in Thailand, criticized Zeneca for exporting paraquat to Burma's military government while the product is banned in same western countries where it is produced.

The **Fair Fruit** initiative was also launched that year under the umbrella of the Vancouver Food Policy Organization. In its effort to promote Fairtrade bananas, this group claimed paraquat and other pesticides are highly toxic to humans and the environment. (24)

In 1998, PAN focused its attention on Nigeria, issuing press releases about a report which alleged 600,000 families were exposed to dangerous levels of paraquat (25) and other chemicals. The **International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)**, a global network of public interest non-governmental organizations united in support of a common POPs elimination goal, was also founded that year. IPEN lists over 230 participating organizations (26) from each continent.

In 1999, PAN Asia released another report, "A Seven-Country Case Study on Women's Exposure to Pesticides," claiming that farmers applying pesticides are often not trained in their use. The New Straits Times (Malaysia) published an article about this and the dangers of pesticides, authored by Jennifer Mourin, campaigns and media officer with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Asia and the Pacific. (27)

In 2000, Fairtrade bananas, advertised as being free from paraquat use, were being exported from Costa Rica to Europe.

In 2001, the Chihuahua State Human Rights Commission blamed the Mexican Attorney General's Office for the death of a two-year-old girl after marijuana fields were sprayed by helicopters. The **Action Network Against Pesticides (RAPAM)** was quoted as an authority and used the incident to spread word of their campaign against paraquat and the rest of the Dirty Dozen.

The Current State of the Campaign Against Paraquat

In March 2002, the Independent (UK) published an article by Jeremy Smith, editor of The Ecologist, an activist magazine. The timing of the article, which dealt with Fairtrade bananas imported by Agrofair UK, coincided with Fairtrade Fortnight 2002, (28) a two-week conference to increase awareness of Fairtrade products. The Eden Project, funded by the Eden Foundation, participated, as well as Fairtrade suppliers of chocolate, British politicians, schools, labor unions, Tesco Supermarket, The Body Shop and members of the press.

At the same time, PAN AP and Tenaganita called for a total ban on paraquat (29) in Malaysia as they released a report on plantation worker health problems. This was publicized with an alarmist press release about the report entitled "Women Plantation Workers Poisoned and Silenced." (30)

In April the **Berne Declaration (BD)**, a socialist-leaning environmentalist group which formerly campaigned against dam building, the Swiss banking system and other issues, followed suit by holding a press briefing, citing another anti-paraquat report, and issuing a press release, "Syngenta Urged to Pull Herbicide on Health Concerns." (31) They also tried to convince Syngenta shareholders to back the campaign. The Berne Declaration was joined by PAN UK, PAN AP, the **Swedish Society for Nature Conservation** and **Foro Emaus**, a Costa Rican environmental group.

In July, the Sierra Club published an article in their magazine about paraquat and coca fields in Colombia, quoting a member of the Colombian branch of the Pesticide Action Network.

The **BD** stepped up its efforts in August, issuing a press release stating that paraquat was responsible for "countless deaths." (32) The timing coincided with a conference held by the International Congress on the Chemistry of Crop Protection. The Berne Declaration was joined by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Foro Emaus (Costa Rica), Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (Malaysia), Pesticide Action Network UK, Pesticide Action Network North America, Pesticide Action Network Germany, Red de Accion sobre Plaguicidas y Alternativas en Mexico (RAPAM), and Pesticide Action Network Latin America (RAP-AL). These groups and others are well-coordinated and have placed similar anti-paraquat statements on their websites, for example, the SSNC or PAN Germany, (33) allowing their message a greater chance to be found via search engines.

The Berne Declaration and allies are still leading the attack with an online tool (34) on their website which allows people to send a form letter to Syngenta calling for a Gramoxone ban. The tool effectively employs viral marketing by easily allowing people to recruit their friends in the anti-paraquat campaign through "Tell a Friend" e-mail messages. In order to participate, one must give an address, allowing the **BD** to gather a base of supporters, who also have the option of receiving their listserv messages. Paraquat has become the BD's main target, and the anti-Syngenta campaign is the first thing one sees on their English website. Other groups, such as the **Organic Consumers Association**, are helping as well by placing links to the BD website. (35)

Asia

These efforts paid off as Malaysia -- a country where a large number of well-funded Western NGOs and Western-funded NGOs operate -- planned banning paraquat in September. Activists

across Asia found this encouraging, according to an article by Inter Press, "Malaysia: Herbicide Ban Spurs Similar Campaigns in Asia," (36) which indicated that Sri Lanka may be the next activist target:

"With the ban in Malaysia, activists in Sri Lanka are determined to rid their country of hazardous chemicals. 'We have had a discussion with PAN to launch a wide campaign not only targeted at paraquat but to oppose other pesticides,' says Sarath Fernando, co-secretary of the **Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform in Sri Lanka**."

Activists from the Philippines were also inspired, such as the **Peasants Movement of the Philippines (KMP)**, which is an affiliate of **Resistance Solidarity against Agro-chemical Transnational Corporations (RESIST)**, a national coalition of farmers' organizations, church groups, and others.

On November 8, The Pesticide Action Network issued a press release, "Paraquat Poisons 153 Workers in the Dominican Republic," (37) but the real reason for its release appears to be to draw attention to the campaign, as links to the online **BD** tool are provided in the second paragraph and little space is given to the Dominican situation.

Meanwhile, a global attack on the Dirty Dozen continues, with PAN and allies issuing a November press release, "Stockholm Convention Ratifications Gain Momentum," (38) about the momentum of their campaign to ban Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Stockholm Convention calls for the global elimination -- not management -- of the so-called Dirty Dozen.

Organic marketing groups

Besides the traditional environmental activists, paraquat and other agricultural chemical scares have been publicly exploited by for-profit organic food companies. However, the line between "non-profit" activists and many of these "for-profit" companies is a dubious one, as they often work together to further their causes (and profits) and even sit on each others' boards of directors. Furthermore, these groups often share public relations firms such as Fenton Communications, who are experts at using activist clients to scare the public into purchasing the products of their corporate clients.

A case in point is the **Organic Coffee Association (ORCA)**, which, according to its website, was established in 1998 by "the radical, non-conformist mind of Adam Teitelbaum, owner of **Adam's Organic Coffees**." ORCA, in its promotion of organic coffee, highlights supposed health and environmental problems caused by paraquat and other chemicals used in coffee production. In fact, the ORCA website even uses activist terminology in its description of ORCA's Dirty Dozen, (39) which is featured prominently on its site and is included its navigation, as it is at Adam's Organic. (40)

Similarly, Michael Straus, founder of **Straus Communications** (41) sits on ORCA's board. Straus's financial ties to the organic food industry go straight to his family, owners of the organic Straus Family Creamery. At the same time, his public relations firm, Straus Communications, represents a number of activist clients (42) and organic organizations, including the Center for Food Safety, (43) the Organic Consumers Association (44) and the Foundation for Deep Ecology. (45)

A similar situation is found with Mark and Neil Ritchie, who run the pro-organic activist organization Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) (46) and are also owners of the for-profit organic and Fairtrade **Peace Coffee** company. With an annual income in excess of \$2.5 million, IATP on its own is a leading player in the anti-biotech and anti-pesticide movement in the US and on a global scale. IATP president Mark Ritchie is also the registered agent for the

Tides Center, an administrative arm of the Tides Foundation which provides tens of millions of dollars annually to various anti-corporate (mainly anti-agriculture) activist campaigns. Tides, together with IATP, the Center for Food Safety, the Organic Consumers Association and others, fund and run such initiatives as the GE Food Alert campaign (47) as well as the **Environmental Media Service**. (48)

Fairtrade

The Fairtrade movement began in 1988 in Holland after coffee prices collapsed by fifty percent. In response, Dutch non-governmental organizations launched the Max Havelaar seal, whose aim it was to certify that coffee brands with this seal were organic and that farmers received above-market prices. In April 1997, the movement took a big step forward internationally when the Fairtrade Labeling Organizations (49) formed in Bonn, Germany, to develop international product-specific and general fair-trade criteria. Besides coffee, the FLO has developed licensing criteria for tea, cocoa, honey, sugar and bananas, and expects to finish criteria for orange-juice concentrate early next year.

While providing better wages and conditions for plantation workers sounds like a noble cause, there is also another side to the Fairtrade organizations. Fairtrade coffee has become a marketing tool for anti-globalists. Its roots in the US can be traced back to **IATP president Mark Ritchie**. In 1994, Ritchie, along with Elizabeth Carney of **Oxfam America Trading**, helped establish **TransFair USA**, (50) which offers the only widely-recognized seal of approval for Fairtrade coffee beans. The certification process often involves hefty fees paid to the certifiers.

IATP, Peace Coffee, and the Trade Research Consortium (a project of the Tides Foundation -- another group with organizational ties to Mark Ritchie) are all members of the Consumer Choice Council (CCC). The Consumer Choice Council was created in 1997 to promote third-party certification eco-labels for consumer products of all sorts. Among the 66 member NGOs affiliated with the CCC are Comercio Justo Mexico, Farm Verified Organic, the Forest Stewardship Council, Global Eco-labeling Network, Green Seal, Marine Stewardship Council, Organic Coffee Association, Oxfam International, Salmon-Safe Inc. and TransFair USA (the U.S. arm of Fairtrade Labeling Organization International). Other members of CCC include Americans for Democratic Action, Defenders of Wildlife, Earth Island Institute, Environmental Defense, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, IUCN-World Conservation Union, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Pesticide Action Network, Rainforest Action Network, Sierra Club, The Humane Society of the United States, the Union of Concerned Scientists and the World Wildlife Fund.

Fairtrade has become popular on college campuses and among Hollywood celebrities. Students at the University of Iowa, (51) for example, are campaigning for it on campus; the town of Berkeley, CA faced a ballot initiative in the last election which, if passed, would have forced every local coffee shop to serve Fairtrade coffee only; and the homepage of the **TransFair USA** website features a video commercial of actor **Martin Sheen** (52) supporting it, with Oxfam America listed as a sponsor.

Oxfam continues to support Fairtrade coffee (53) and has designed an online tool, similar to the Berne Declaration's, which allows people to automatically send messages to "decision makers" in their campaign to persuade Procter and Gamble to buy Fairtrade coffee. Oxfam is also getting help from IATP, who distribute dozens of messages daily on agriculture and globalization issues via various listservs.

In the UK, the Fairtrade Foundation is currently running a supermarket campaign featuring "Banana Bonanza Stalls" (54) in order to promote the new FAIRTRADE Mark bananas. The Foundation is using Internet listserv messages to recruit campaigners and to gather information on them through surveys.

CONCLUSIONS

As noted in the Atrazine report (55) and reflected by past anti-conventional agriculture campaigns, the activist groups opposing paraquat are generally presented as trusted sources of information by the media and continue to campaign against paraquat and the rest of the "Dirty Dozen." There is a tight synergy between anti-pesticide groups like PAN and pro-organic groups like the Organic Consumer's Association and the Fairtrade organizations.

Today these environmental activist groups are professionally trained, well organized and spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually (56) on lobbying, legislative initiatives, public relations, litigation, and shareholder and advertising campaigns. They are representative of and integral to an emerging multi-billion dollar protest industry. Among these activist groups' principal targets is modern agriculture, and it should come as no surprise that the vast majority of their efforts are funded by multi-billion dollar organic and natural products industry interests who consider these actions part of their marketing efforts. (57)

Their campaigns are founded on fear-based claims that are then turned into "facts" by continual repetition. Politicizing and redefining existing research, and designing and creating new "research analysis" to support their predetermined assumptions of harm, these activists time and again outmaneuver academics, independent scientists and industry experts in the arena of public opinion and media coverage. Activist weapons of choice (58) include repetitive cycles of:

- **Research creation and manipulation** (including reports from PAN and others)
- **Free media exploitation** (Driven by Fenton Communications, Strauss Communications and APC/ICG)
- **Paid issues advertising** (NORML campaign and various anti-pesticide group initiatives)
- **Legislative & regulatory lobbying** (The Stockholm Convention)
- **Corporate stakeholder and shareholder initiatives** (Fairtrade promotion, claims that paraquat manufacturers are not "socially responsible")
- **Litigation** (Lawsuits against spraying marijuana fields and farm worker class action suits)
- **Publishing** (Books such as "Our Stolen Future")
- **Amplification** (Repetition of messages through print, websites and listservs)

Activist-funded third-party groups are aggressively attempting to denigrate pesticide use by controlling the dialogue. For example:

Overture.com "key word" purchase for "pesticide"

Pesticides, Environment and Our Health

Envirohealthaction is a place where the health community can learn and take action on various environmental issues and topics. Visit our website and our collection of links to learn more.

www.envirohealthaction.org

(Advertiser's Max Bid: \$0.31)

EnviroHealthAction (59) claims to be an "action center that provides an online community for health professionals." However, they are supported by **Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)**, (60) a member of the **International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)**. They are also funded by the Turner Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, and routinely issue press releases and reports (61) about pesticides in drinking water.

Key words defining Atrazine in the public discourse today:

- Marijuana (especially in chat rooms)
- Parkinson's disease
- Suicide
- Posion
- Herbicide
- Pesticide
- Weed Killer
- Cancer

Terms (most) frequently associated with key term "paraquat" [559/33,300]

[past year's "media hits"/ and top search engine "hits"]

- **Ban/banned [32/1,220]**
- Birth defects [3/1,470]
- Cancer [11/4,620]
- **Dangerous [17/2,490]**
- Dirty Dozen [0/237]
- Endocrine disrupter [2 /60]
- Fairtrade [1/54]
- Health risk [3/691]
- Hermaphrodism [0/5]
- Hormone disrupter [2/12]
- Lawsuit [5/271]
- **Malaysia [13/924]**
- Mutations/deformities [5/950]

- Organochlorine [6/925]
- **Persistent [15 /1,910]**
- POP [8/668]
- **Poison [42,2,220]**
- Persistent bioaccumulative toxins [0/9]
- **Pollution [17/3,580]**
- Public health risk [0/31]
- Sexual dysfunction [0/60]
- Sterility [0/367]
- **Suicide [30,743]**
- **Toxin [19/1,490]**
- **Toxic [70/7,000]**

Other related key words often associated with paraquat:

- Diquat
- Gramoxone
- DDT

Paraquat alone is not a "hot" topic for the general public yet, with fewer than 800 searches on the top engines in the past month:

Searches done in October 2002	
Count	Search Term
762	paraquat
36	paraquat poisoning
25	operation paraquat

As compared with the more generic term, "pesticide":

Searches done in October 2002	
Count	Search Term
14614	pesticide
1507	forum international pesticide
1475	ddt pesticide
560	pesticide use
545	organic pesticide

447	natural pesticide
438	pesticide label
406	pesticide picture
380	effects of pesticide
281	chemical pesticide
255	pesticide safety
220	danger of pesticide
218	pesticide pollution
204	history pesticide
194	california department pesticide regulation
193	pesticide in food
191	pesticide alternative
168	pesticide poisoning

The current online environment is not as significantly dominated by negative activist messages for paraquat as it is for a key word such as "pesticide." Search-engine results for "paraquat" often reveal government or university websites, but two activist groups -- the Berne Declaration and PAN -- have been successful in this regard. For example, a Google search currently ranks the Berne Declaration as numbers 5 and 6, and PAN as numbers 14 and 15. Results are however significantly worse when other terms are used in conjunction with "paraquat" in the search. For example, in a search for "paraquat and ban," all ten of the top ten results are for activist websites or negative news articles. Similar results are found when searching for paraquat and "Fairtrade" or "Dirty Dozen."

These characterizations are a direct result of persistent and effective activist campaigns over the past 10-15 years. Activist groups have used virtually all the tools in their box, from supporting class-action lawsuits and direct litigation to paid advertising and aggressive free media. The positioning of these claims by the activists clearly indicates a targeting of women as the principal landing zone for these attacks.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the current monitoring we recommend the following actions in the areas of content development, additional research and outreach:

- 1) **CONTENT:**
 - Develop simple messaging (risk communications talking points) and supportive facts to reflect key attacks (3 key areas: Safety, Environment & Control) with specifics in:
 - a. (CONTROL) Farmer suicides, farm worker safety, etc...
 - b. (SAFETY) Human Safety with specifics in areas of Parkinson's, cancer, etc...
 - c. (ENVIRONMENT) Environmental profile, water, fauna, etc...
- 2) **CONTENT:**
 - Develop generic content documents and background materials to be publicly leveraged by third parties via earned media and viral (online) marketing (and translate materials into Spanish, French and other languages as needed).
 - a. Paraquat backgrounder (benefits and facts)
 - b. Paraquat generic news release (to be used and adapted as needed)
 - c. Paraquat op-ed (generic body)
 - d. Paraquat letter-to-the editor
- 3) **RESEARCH:**
 - Identify (principally developing world oriented) potential allies (groups and individuals). Examples include:
 - a. Africa: Michael Mbville, MD (Food Security Network -- FSN)
 - b. India: Barun Mitra, (Liberty Institute)
 - c. US: Alex Avery (Center for Global Food Issues -- CGFI)
 - d. And, support from other third-party groups and farm organizations
- 4) **RESEARCH:**
 - Develop list of developing-world and food-security-/agriculture-oriented sponsorships and event participation opportunities to be considered by Syngenta to create good will and potential allies:
 - a. InterAction annual meeting (humanitarian and development NGOs)
 - b. Food Security Network (Asia, Africa and Latin America arms)

- 5) OUTREACH:** Offer message and communication training day hosted by Syngenta (at the request of FSN and CGFI) on atrazine & paraquat in DC for core US-based supporters (Consumer Alert, CGFI, FSN, National Center, Capital Research, CEI, Consumer Freedom, etc...).
- 6) OUTREACH:** Share messaging with allies via third-party (Food Security Network and CGFI) with other potential allies.
- 7) OUTREACH:** Support allies in posting relevant documents online and optimizing pages for search engines.
- 8) OUTREACH:** Support allies in free-media and new ally outreach in developing world and among target influence groups (colleges).
- a. News articles via FSN wire targeted to developing world print journalists and food security NGOs
 - b. Radio infomercials via FSN wire and downloadable on support sites targeted to developing world radio outlets
 - c. Radio infomercials via College Media News Service on development/food security-related generic pesticide support (referencing paraquat) to US college audience
- 9) OUTREACH:** Rapid-response program using content developed and trained third parties to generate real-time response to attacks on paraquat/atrazine.
- 10) OUTREACH:** Create online tools to link and leverage support (and/or opposition to banning) for paraquat/atrazine
- a. Create Paraquat.com website with facts from Syngenta including automated response from Syngenta to the Berne Declaration Tool. (62)
 - b. Create Support-Paraquat.org website (sponsored by third party) to leverage and reflect combined third-party support efforts
 - c. Flexible "comment" generator to be used in multiple markets w/ multiple targets as needed
 - d. Online survey tool to be used by multiple sites
 - e. Content downloads including posters and mailers
 - f. Create (CGFI/FSN sponsored) online discussion group (listserv) via support-paraquat site to rapidly share monitoring results and tactical response options and other outreach opportunities