

Pesticide Myths - LTE *Arizona Daily Star* (May,1987)

The statements by the president of the Arizona Pest Control Association reported in the Star (May 22, "Homeowner's pesticide use the most perilous, panel says") are typical of the myths about pesticide safety perpetuated by the chemical industry.

The pesticide chlordane, for instance, rather than being "no more toxic than an aspirin," is, in fact, a known carcinogen banned in several states and foreign countries, severely restricted in others, and under review for suspension by the Environmental Protection Agency due to its extreme toxicity. Malathion, rather than being "less toxic than table salt," is a suspected carcinogen, a mere poison, and dangerous even in small amounts, as proved by the recent incident at Homer Davis Elementary School.

A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences said that 80 percent of the pesticides analyzed by the Academy exceeded the EPA threshold of "acceptable" risk for causing cancer. That study examined only the residues found in raw foods; the risk from residues on prepared foods, from direct and indirect exposure in homes and in agricultural areas is even higher.

That is why conservationists, farm labor organizations and medical people are insisting that the Arizona Commission on Agriculture and Horticulture drastically revise its proposed rules for pesticide use in Arizona. The Commission's proposed rules are designed to protect the chemical industry, not public health.