



Clean Annapolis River Project

Pesticide Inventory Agriculture Sector Fact Sheet

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In agriculture, pesticides are generally used to control or destroy unwanted vegetation, diseases or animals, mainly insects or rodents, in crops.



Methodology

Data on the agricultural use of pesticides was gathered using three methods:

1- Collection of pesticide use information directly from farmers. Seventeen farmers growing various crop types were randomly selected and contacted; nine chose to participate.

2- Acquisition of agricultural pesticide sales records from vendors in the area. These records were acquired from the NS Department of Environment and Labour.

3- Crop specialists and other individuals knowledgeable on the use of pesticides in the watershed were consulted.



Results

Agricultural pesticides were determined to account for 53% of total watershed pesticide application.

Farmers

Farmers were the most accurate data source, however, only a small proportion of watershed farmers participated in the inventory, resulting in insufficient information being available to be used for watershed-scale estimates.



Sales Records

Sales records indicated that approximately 29,100kg of active ingredients had been sold by commercial vending establishments in the watershed in 2004.

Other Information Sources

Information on active ingredients commonly applied to tree fruit, berries and field crops was obtained from crop specialists. No data on vegetable crops could be acquired. Estimates on the quantity of active ingredients applied in the watershed in one year totaled over 38,000kg; significantly more than the quantity obtained from sales records.



Comparison of Data Sources

Possible explanations for the different quantities obtained from the three data sources include:

- Pesticide vending establishments' sales extend beyond the watershed. Managers were contacted and asked what proportion of their sales were made within watershed borders. It is possible managers underestimated their proportion of sales in the watershed.
- Farmers may have obtained pesticides from sources other than local vendors.
- Pest pressures change from year to year, therefore estimates may not have accurately described pesticide application patterns in the year for which sales records were obtained.
- A combination of all above-mentioned factors could be responsible for this marked difference.

Since the sale of commercial pesticides is recorded and reported to the NS Dept. of Environment and Labour, it appears that sales records were the most accurate in determining the amount of active ingredients applied in the watershed. This was also most complete source of information.