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Foresight

Analysis

Trouble
Shooting

Strategy

Joint Fact Finding Study Group on Genetically Modified Crops and Pesticides on Kaua‘i

Update #3

June 6, 2015

1. Moving Towards Phase 3

Roughly speaking, the JFF process is working its way through 4 broad phases: (1) initial project organization and compilation of assertions; (2) the gathering of data and empirical information from relevant reports and studies; (3) formulation of a preliminary set of “findings” to the initial questions posited; and (4) the development of a set of recommendations based on the findings. Before the Study Group’s findings and recommendations are finalized, the public will be invited to offer comments on a draft.

As of this date, we are finishing a series of invitational “listening sessions” (with members of DOA, DOH, NGOs, physicians, ex-EPA scientists, journalists, and others) and beginning the process of putting findings together based on the best available empirical evidence on the following questions:

On Agriculture

1. What is the current specific agricultural footprint of GM seed company agriculture on Kaua‘i? What farming areas are being leased and contracted by which GM seed company?
2. Who else on Kaua‘i engages in genetically modified agriculture and what pesticides do they use?
3. Is GM seed corn less vigorous and more vulnerable to stress and pests than hybrid seed corn?

On Pesticides

4. What restricted use pesticides (RUPs) and major non-RUPs are currently used by GM seed companies on Kaua‘i in what amounts? Where and when are they being applied?
5. What RUPs and major non-RUPs do other agricultural users on Kaua‘i currently use and in what amounts? Where are these other agricultural users located? What are the distributions and concentrations of pesticides of these other agricultural users?
6. What RUPs and major non-RUPs were used for pineapple and sugar production and which legacy pesticides are still present in the soil or water?
7. What pesticides and major non-RUPs are currently used on Kaua‘i by County, State and Federal governments, and in what amounts?
8. What pesticides and major non-RUPs are used by homeowners and termite controllers on Kaua‘i and in what amounts?
9. What are the known toxicity and maximum exposure levels for the RUPs and major non-RUPs used by seed companies on Kaua‘i?
10. How often are pesticides applied by seed companies? Where are they being applied? On what schedules?
11. How much glyphosate is used on Kaua‘i by the seed companies?
12. How much glyphosate is used on Kaua‘i by others?
13. How much pesticide “drift” comes off lands farmed by the seed companies, and where?
14. What precautions do seed companies use to prevent off-property drift?
15. Are any experimental pesticides developed or used by the seed companies on Kaua‘i? If so, in what quantities, and how many have been developed?
16. Do seed companies combine or “stack” pesticides?
17. Do seed companies use “masking agents” to camouflage the odors of pesticides?
18. Are organic products pesticide-free?
19. How many ‘Experimental Use Permits’ have been issued to pesticide users on Kaua‘i?
20. What are the basic requirements for someone to become a certified applicator for RUPs?
21. How many certified RUP users are located on Kaua‘i, and what categories of RUP usage are they certified for?
22. What pesticide products currently used on Kaua‘i contain neonicotinoids?

On Possible Health Impacts

23. What caused the incidents at Waimea Canyon School? Have there been any long-term adverse health effects from those incidents?
24. Have there been other evacuations of schools or other institutions on Kaua‘i due to pesticide complaints? Where did these evacuations occur?

25. Is the health profile of West side communities proximate to seed company operations different from other parts of Kaua‘i, other counties, and the state as a whole?
26. What evidence exists to show that West side communities or others on Kaua‘i have suffered cancer harms from seed company operations?
27. What evidence exists to show that West side communities or others on Kaua‘i have suffered birth defects harms from seed company operations?
28. What evidence exists to show that West side communities or others on Kaua‘i have suffered asthma or other respiratory harms from seed company operations?
29. What evidence exists to show that West side communities or others on Kaua‘i have suffered autism or other learning disability harms from seed company operations?
30. What are the latest published health risks of glyphosate and malathion?

On Possible Environmental Impacts

31. Which pesticides used by GM companies “bind” into Kauai’s soils and what are their half-lives?
32. Are bees (as pollinators) on Kaua‘i being affected by the pesticides used by GM seed companies?
33. Have the pesticides used by GM seed companies created new “super bugs” or “super weeds”?
34. Is there evidence of in-stream or near shore water contamination from GM seed company pesticide use? If so, when and where?
35. Is there evidence of contamination to Native Hawaiian salt-making areas? If so, when and where?
36. Is there any evidence of damage to inland aquatic life from pesticide use? If so, where and when?
37. Is there evidence of damage to near shore marine life from GM seed company pesticide use?

On Notification, Oversight and Regulation

38. What types of notifications are posted by seed companies regarding their pesticide applications?
39. How many complaints about pesticide exposure have been received on Kaua‘i? By whom and when? What happened as a result?
40. Who oversees pesticide use in Hawai‘i and are their efforts sufficient and effective to protect human and environmental health?
41. What is and is not publicly disclosed about pesticide use by the seed companies?
42. Are the disclosures made by the seed companies under the current voluntary Good Neighbor program sufficient to address public concerns?

43. What types of internal controls do the GM companies use to control access to and exposure from pesticides used in their operations?
44. What notifications do government agencies need to post regarding application of pesticides on Kaua‘i?

Phase-3 will commence shortly as the JFF Study Group deliberates and formulates its initial “findings” on the above questions. Phase-4 will begin in September or October to formulate specific “recommendations” consistent with the scope of work.

2. Current and Planned Activities

Over the coming months, additional “Listen and Learn” sessions will be scheduled. Persons interested in having members of the JFF visit with their groups should contact:

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