

Media Release: Biological Farmers of Australia, 9th May 2011

US studies show children's IQ deficiencies caused by exposure to pesticides during pregnancy

Prenatal exposure to organophosphate (OP) insecticides causes IQ deficiencies in children according to three separate United States university studies published in the April edition of the Environmental Health Perspectives journal.

All three studies, funded by the National Institutes of Health, examined the connection between delayed neurological development and exposure to common agricultural pesticides from dietary and environmental sources. The result likened the effects of OP exposure during pregnancy to that of high lead exposure, impacting the cognitive development of children.

Organic products are grown without the use of synthetic agrichemicals, including OP insecticides.

Jo Immig, coordinator of the National Toxics Network comments, "There are numerous studies which point to the neurological impacts of low-level organophosphate exposures and these latest findings once again show how this can occur in ways that weren't anticipated.

"These impacts can span generations and impact on the most vulnerable members of the community – children.

"The regulation of pesticides in Australia is lagging well behind many other progressive countries such as Canada and the European Union. It's time for an overhaul on the regulation of pesticides in Australia to ensure the system works to protect the health of the community and the environment."

As the voice of Australian organics, the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) advocates the benefits of organic food and farming, focusing on improved health and environmental sustainability. Holly Vyner, BFA general manager says that by supporting the organic industry, Australians are supporting a cleaner environment, healthier farms and a healthier society.

"Consumers should choose 'certified organic' products to avoid consumption of harmful agrichemicals and to give children the best potential for growth and development.

"Look for a certification logo such as the Australian Certified Organic "Bud" logo for organic food you can trust."

To view the peer-reviewed studies, all funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health, visit Environmental Health Perspectives, <http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/home.action>.

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