

# ***Pesticide Exposures For People In Agricultural Areas***

## ***A Breath Of Fresh Air?***



*Georgina Downs and her father Ray regularly exposed to toxic pesticides in their air and living environment*

*“People move to the countryside thinking it will be a healthy environment to bring up their children and do not know about the dangers and risks inherent in the spraying of poisonous chemicals on surrounding fields, until they themselves suffer adverse effects on their health.”*  
**Georgina Downs, A Rural Idyll?**



## ***NEW VIDEO: Pesticide Exposures for People in Agricultural Areas***

***By UK Pesticides Campaigner Georgina Downs***

### **Quotes from the video:-**

*“The Government have not taken action before probably because it hasn’t happened to anyone’s knowledge in their backyard. I mean if they had the spraying in the fields next to their house and one of their family was affected, I would imagine something would be done pretty quickly.”*

**John Elson, Uckfield**

*“It seems extraordinary that this playground is a facility for young children with vulnerable immune systems and they’re being regularly exposed to these poisons.”*

**Nicola Plowman, Lincolnshire**

*“It just seems to be too much of a coincidence all the people and animals getting cancer and that’s just cancer, we’re not talking about other diseases.”*

**Sally Brown, Suffolk**

*“We don’t know anything about chemicals, what do you expect us to do about them?”*

**A doctor to Margaret Reichlin, Hampshire**

## **Pesticide Facts:**

- Pesticides are poisonous chemicals and are inherently hazardous to human health
- In a recent European Commission Communication "A European Environment and Health Strategy," (the SCALE initiative) it states that "Pesticides are possibly related to immunological effects, endocrine-disrupting effects, neurotoxic disorders and cancer"
- There is currently no legal obligation for farmers to notify anyone of any intended spraying application or to supply information on the chemicals being used, regardless of whether adverse health effects have been suffered
- At the present time a crop-sprayer is legally allowed to repeatedly spray mixtures of poisonous chemicals right up to the open window of any occupied premises whether it be a resident's home, a school (nursery, infant, primary etc.) a home for the elderly or disabled or any office or workplace

## **Campaign: A Breath of Fresh Air?**

- Georgina Downs campaigns to highlight the effects of pesticide use in rural Britain and has lived next to regularly sprayed fields for 20 years. She has investigated the history of crop-spraying and the regulatory system for pesticides and met with Government Ministers to present her case for a change in the regulations and legislation governing agricultural spraying. She has also produced 2 videos "Pesticide Exposures for People in Agricultural Areas – Part 1 Pesticides in the Air, Part 2 The Hidden Costs" to illustrate chemical exposure and the effects on people living in rural areas
- She has called for an immediate ban on crop-spraying and the use of pesticides near to people's homes, schools, workplaces and any other places of human habitation and for the introduction of a new legal obligation to warn people before spraying and to provide direct access to all the necessary chemical information, including to a farm's spray history in view of any chronic long-term illness/disease
- Ms. Downs' campaign was featured on The Food Police BBC1 March 26<sup>th</sup> 2003; The Observer on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2003 ("*Georgina's Fight Against Toxic Peril*" and "*Can We Have a Breath of Fresh Air?*") and on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004; Today programme BBC Radio 4 July 11<sup>th</sup> 2002; Farming Today BBC Radio 4 on March 25<sup>th</sup>, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003 and June 17<sup>th</sup> 2004; Sunday Telegraph on June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 28<sup>th</sup> 2002, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003, June 20<sup>th</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup> 2004; BBC Breakfast News August 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 and June 16<sup>th</sup> 2004; You and Yours BBC Radio 4 on September 1<sup>st</sup>, November 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2003, January 3<sup>rd</sup> and February 18<sup>th</sup> 2005; That's Esther ITV January 25<sup>th</sup> 2004 and in various other media
- DEFRA launched a Consultation on crop-spraying on July 21<sup>st</sup> 2003. This Consultation resulted in the highest number of responses since DEFRA records began. As a result of the Consultation, Alun Michael, the Minister for Rural Affairs announced on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 that he had requested a special study to be carried out by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution to assess the risk to people from crop-spraying and pesticide exposure. Their report is due to be published in June 2005
- Ms Downs' campaign has the support of, amongst others, Professor Samuel Epstein and the US Cancer Prevention Coalition, the Soil Association, Allergy UK, PAN-UK, WEN, Caroline Lucas MEP, as well as an increasing number of MP's, including Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrats' front bench environment spokesman

*For further information in relation to Ms. Downs' submission to the DEFRA Consultation and accompanying video, featuring people from all over the country reporting clusters of acute and chronic long-term illnesses and diseases in communities surrounded by sprayed fields*

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