POISONS

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DANGEROUS" category. It is surpassed by the poison listed at the top, "Temik", and also by a relatively new (OP) Class spray (not shown here) marketed by the Shell Oil Company (one more reason to boycott them), called AZODRIN, which, when tested on female mice only required about half the dose of parathion to kill them. Incidentally, one more Shell product to avoid for home use is the strong organic phosphate VAPONA, advertised as a fly killer to hang down from your ceiling, but which my local CO-OP advises against using, especially in the kitchen of your home.

2.) Also enclosed is some information about the general harmfulness of chlorinated hydrocarbons, of which DDT and DDD, though most well-known of this class, can be seen from the Spraymen Hazards Table to be quite a lot less hazardous than aldrin, dieldrin and endrin, and also less than BHC (Benzene Hexachloride); Chlordane; Thiodan; heptachlor; lindane and texaphene.

3.) All the pesticides listed in the Hazards Table are judged primarily on skin poisoning and secondarily by mouth, but, of course, sprayers on the average are better dressed for both kinds of danger than pickers.

4.) Mrs. Beatrice T. mentions "snuff...made up of flower petal dust", and undoubtedly she is referring to pyrethrins or "pyrethrum flowers" derived from oils of certain Chrysanthemums. These are not non-poisonous to people, but would certainly fall into the least dangerous category in the table, and combined with piperonyl butoxide which is practically non-toxic, is fine for household use. But, these are not used generally for commercial crops, since they are so short-lived, insect-killing potency disappearing in a matter of hours, or one day at the outside. Malathion, on the other hand, (which is the chief ingredient of some pet flea sprays) comes as close as most synthetic pesticides can to being safe, with care for people, while being effective for a number of insects (remember the whole city of Dallas was sprayed with this to eliminate mosquitos carrying a fatal disease). It is residual enough without being too much so, lasting from a few days to a couple of weeks at the outside.

5.) What distinguishes an "ideal" pesticide from the run-of-the-mill is its specificity for the pest to be eliminated, or at least its preferential poisonousness to cold-blooded animals as against birds and mammals. Growers, of course, want something fast, cheap, and long-lasting, and, in third or forth place, not too harmful to humans. The organic phosphates of the "less dangerous" category could fill their bill with proper care in use, that is, substantial protection to spraymen and keeping crop farm workers out of the area when spraying is going on, since in their work it is not practical to wear the proper protective equipment and the availability of hospitalization in case of accidental contact with residual poison when they work after spraying. But, as I doubtless don't need to tell you, these are things which require an active and representative union working both on the local union level and the state and national political level.

Yours for success to La Huelga
We MUST win,
Stanley Gow
Berkeley, California

EL MALCRIADO SAYS: Our thanks to Mr. Gow for his well-researched letter. In answer to one of his points, our concern over DDT is because the build-up over the years, of DDT in the bodies and tissue of farm workers is bringing us, as a class of Americans, dangerously close to poisoning. Several years ago, Rachel Carson estimated that farm workers had 3 times the amount of DDT in their systems as other Americans. Since many farm worker mothers breast feed their babies, the danger of poisoning the babies, or giving them cancer or some unknown disease, is even greater. Time may be running out for us and our children. We have also stressed parathion and DDT because of their widespread use on grapes, our main concern of the moment.

But you are right in pinpointing other poisons as more immediate dangers. The Union has extensive consultation with University of California experts and others on this problem, and should come up with model clauses on pesticides for all future contracts. Again, as you pointed out, only a strong Union local can enforce on-the-scene safety precautions, and a strong national Union is the best vehicle for getting good state and national laws and making sure that they are enforced.

ESTIMATED RELATIVE ACUTE TOXIC HAZARDS OF PESTICIDES TO SPRAYMEN*

Most Dangerous	*Dangerous*	
carbanolate, Temik (M)‡	aldrin (CH)	EPN (OP)
demeton, Systox® (OP)	Bidrin® (OP)	ethion, Nialate® (OP)
disulfoton, Di-Syston® (OP)	carbophenothion, Trithion® (OP)	methyl parathion (OP)
mevinphos, Phosdrin® (OP)	DDVP, dichlorvos (OP)	nicotine (M)
parathion (OP)	dieldrin (CH)	pentachlorophenol (M)
phorate, Thimet® (OP)	dioxathion, Delnav® (OP)	phosphamidon, Dimecron® (OP)
schradan, OMPA (OP)	DNOC (N)	sodium arsenite (M)
tepp (OP)	DNOSBP (N)	Zectran® (C)
thionazin, Zinophos® (OP)	endrin (CH)	