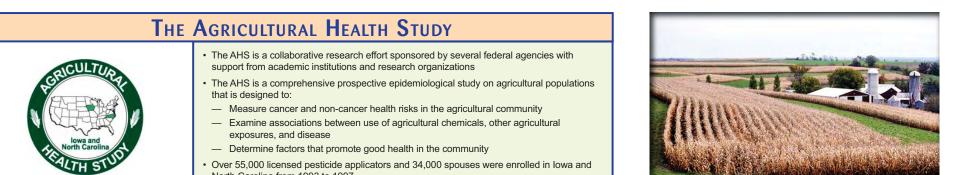
# THE AGRICULTURAL HEALTH STUDY:

# COLLABORATIVE HEALTH AND EXPOSURE RESEARCH FOR THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Kent Thomas<sup>1</sup>, Ruth Allen<sup>2</sup>, Dale Sandler<sup>3</sup>, Aaron Blair<sup>4</sup>, Jane Hoppin<sup>3</sup>, Cynthia Hines<sup>5</sup>, Michael Alavanja<sup>4</sup> <sup>1</sup>U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development, <sup>2</sup>U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs,

<sup>3</sup>National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, <sup>4</sup>National Cancer Institute, <sup>5</sup>National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



North Carolina from 1993 to 1997 Follow-up of health and agricultural practices in the cohort is ongoing

# **AGRICULTURAL HEALTH STUDY COLLABORATORS**

#### Leading the Epidemiological Studies

National Cancer Institute National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences University of Iowa - Iowa AHS Field Station Battelle CPHRE – North Carolina AHS Field Station Westat - AHS Coordinating Center

Leading the Exposure Studies

U.S. EPA, ORD, National Exposure Research Laboratory National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Battelle Columbus and CPHRE University of Iowa RTI International Southwest Research Institute

## **Epidemiological Studies**

Health Outcome Results

Examples of findings to date:

et al., 2002, 2003, and 2004)

AHS researchers are examining health outcomes and their possible

· Members of the AHS cohort experienced a 50% lower mortality rate

compared to the general population in Iowa and North Carolina over a

The AHS cohort experienced a lower rate of overall cancer incidence; rates

of a few cancers appear elevated, including multiple myeloma and cancers

of the lip, gallbladder, ovary, prostate, and thyroid, but numbers for many of

The incidence of prostate cancer among pesticide applicators in the AHS is slightly higher (14%) than it is for other men in North Carolina and Iowa; the

risk increased with increasing use of methyl bromide (Alavanja et al., 2003)

Exposure to diesel exhaust and solvents are the strongest risk factors for

wheeze in the AHS cohort while raising farm animals, particularly poultry,

and the use of several pesticides are also associated with wheeze (Hoppin

about these results can be found at www.aghealth.org.

follow-up period of about 5 years (Blair et al., 2004)

these cancers are small (Alavanja et al., in press)

associations with agricultural exposures. Many health outcome studies

have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. More information

Despite low mortality and cancer incidence rates overall, farmers may experience excess risk of specific cancers and other adverse health outcomes. Farmers, their families, and other pesticide applicators may have contact with a variety of potentially hazardous substances (e.g., pesticides, solvents, fuels, oils, exhaust, dust). Previous epidemiologic studies in agricultural populations have been limited by inadequate or retrospective exposure information. Limitations of these previous studies are being addressed through the Agricultural Health Study.

#### Anticipated Impact

The Agricultural Health Study is designed to identify occupational, lifestyle, and genetic factors that may affect the rate of diseases in agricultural populations. This study will provide information that agricultural workers can use in making decisions about their health and the health of their families. Results from the study will inform risk assessments and mitigation decisions, and will provide information for agricultural safety training and education. The impact will extend beyond agricultural populations to other populations where pesticide exposures may occur.



#### Science Issues

Information derived from the epidemiological study questionnaires is used to investigate associations between pesticide exposure and specific diseases. Exposure measurement data are needed to assess and refine these questionnaire-based exposure classification procedures. Identifying and understanding key exposure factors can also guide development of improved exposure reduction strategies. Anticipated Impact

Supporting the Epidemiological and Exposure Studies U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs, Health Effects Division

This research will improve exposure and health risk assessments in the AHS epidemiological study. The results may also provide information on how pesticides can be handled more safely to reduce the exposures to farm-workers and their families

### **Exposure Study Results**

The U.S. EPA led the AHS Pesticide Exposure Study which examined exposure to 2,4-D or chlorpyrifos for 84 AHS pesticide applicators in Iowa and North Carolina, and for a subset of participating applicator family members. Some preliminary results are described below; data analysis is ongoing.

The NIOSH led the Orchard Fungicide Exposure Study which examined the exposure to selected fungicides for 74 AHS participants from farms in North Carolina and Iowa. Data collation and analysis is currently underway.

## Some preliminary results from the EPA Pesticide Exposure Study:

- Significant correlations were found between measured exposures and exposure intensity derived from questionnaire information
- Chlorpyrifos exposures were higher for liquid products compared to granular products.
- · Differences in exposure were observed for different work practices
- · Significant correlations were found between urinary biomarker concentrations and dermal exposure levels
- Low urinary biomarker concentrations were found for most applicator spouses and children; significant correlations were observed between applicator and spouse urine concentrations for 2 4-D

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Research scientists from federal agencies and the lowa and North Carolina AHS Field Stations have developed and implemented plans for communicating with study participants and other stakeholders using a variety of products and dissemination methods to reach a wide audience

Disclaimer: Although this work was reviewed by Discretationer: Annough this work was reviewed by the U.S. EPA and approved for publication, it may not necessarily reflect official Agency policy. The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



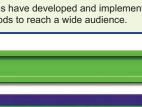






# SCIENCE ISSUES AND RESEARCH IMPACT **Exposure Studies**





**Collaborative Science** for Environmental Solutions