

# PESTICIDE REGULATION AT THE HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

In Hawaii, pesticide sales, registration, application and safe use are regulated by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, Pesticides Branch, <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/pi/pest/>

The Department of Health has oversight when pesticides affect environmental quality or the safety of locally grown food. The Safe Drinking Water Branch (SDWB), Clean Water Branch (CWB), Food and Drug Branch (F&DB), and the Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response (HEER) Office are all involved in addressing the health and environmental effects of pesticide use in Hawaii.

## Food and Drug Branch

The F&DB, <http://health.hawaii.gov/food-drug/>, enforces food, drug, cosmetic, medical device, and dietary supplement laws in the state. The F&DB routinely collects and tests a variety of produce samples each month for pesticide residues to ensure that pesticides are being used consistent with their labeling, and takes enforcement action when it discovers improper use of pesticides. F&DB also oversees the labeling of food in Hawaii.

- During a 2012 inspection of fresh basil samples grown on Oahu, the F&DB identified four farms that were using unapproved pesticides on their basil crops. The farms plowed under growing crops, destroyed the affected basil, and the contaminated crops were restricted from sale and distribution.
- Over the last several years, the F&DB has also inspected green onion, mint, cucumber, papaya, and a variety of other crops and detected improper use of pesticides. This has resulted in DOH issuance of cease & desist letters, notices of violation and destruction of affected crops.



## Safe Drinking Water Branch

The SDWB, <http://health.hawaii.gov/sdwb/>, is responsible for safeguarding public health by protecting Hawaii's drinking water sources (surface water and groundwater) from contamination (including pesticides), and assures that owners and operators of public water systems provide safe drinking water to the community. If a substance is detected, the water system follows a process to locate the source of contamination, notify water system users, and take appropriate action.

- Water treatment technologies like Granulated Activated Carbon (GAC) and Air Stripping are used to remove pesticides like 1,2-Dibromo-3-Chloropropane (DBCP), Ethylene Dibromide (EDB), and 1,2,3-Trichloropropane from drinking water.
- In Kunia on Oahu, the water system employs GAC to remove pesticides from drinking water caused by former pineapple farming in the area.

## Clean Water Branch

The CWB, <http://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/>, conducts a variety of water surveillance and watershed-based environmental management activities in the state through permit issuance, monitoring, enforcement, sponsorship of polluted runoff control projects, and public education.

- In October 2012, CWB issued a new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit to regulate point source discharges from the application of pesticides (including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, and various other substances to control pests) in or near state waters.
- Recent CWB water quality monitoring conducted in areas around the state detected varying levels of pesticides in surface waters. CWB is currently assisting the HEER Office with water monitoring for an ongoing pilot surface water and sediment study.

## Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response

The HEER Office, <http://eha-web.doh.hawaii.gov/eha-cma/Org/HEER/>, prevents, plans for, responds to, and enforces environmental laws relating to releases or threats of releases of hazardous substances.

- The HEER Office, with assistance from CWB, has partnered with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct an ongoing pilot surface water and sediment study. The study uses a snapshot approach to gather pesticide data at ~ 20 sites statewide, and will test for virtually every kind of pesticide used in the state. The sites were selected to represent four major pesticide use practices.

- The purpose of the pilot study is to assess the extent to which pesticides are reaching streams and nearshore waters in concentrations that adversely affect water quality, and will guide future initiatives. The Office expects to complete sampling in early 2014, and the results will be available to the public when the study report is finished.
- In 2012, the HEER Office, with assistance from U.S. EPA, completed a cleanup of a former sugar mill pesticide mixing and storage site in Kilauea, Kauai. The area contained elevated levels of arsenic and dioxin, and the Office helped remove over 814 tons of contaminated soil from residential and commercial property, and capped a drainage ditch with a concrete barrier where elevated levels of contaminants were discovered.
- In compliance with House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 129, the Office recently finished a Legislative Report on atrazine use in Hawaii that explored atrazine contamination, reported on findings, and made recommendations. This report is available on line at

<http://co.doh.hawaii.gov/sites/LegRpt/2014/Reports/1/HCR%20129F.pdf>

