

National AGROTOXIC/ PESTICIDES USE REDUCTION Plan

Argentina, August 2019

Brazilian medical organizations such as ABRASCO and the Brazilian Pediatric Society are proposing/suggesting a law to achieve a **Reduction in the Use of Pesticides** in that country. France launched its plan in 2008 to reduce the use and pollution with pesticides, as well as the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium. While Argentina consumes more than 500 million liters of pesticides that generate an exposition (contact) of 11 liters per Argentine per year, an exposition that is much higher in agricultural areas where the rate of cancer, congenital malformations, autism, hypothyroidism, asthma, etc. are several times higher than those in the cities where there is not dusting/spraying/fumigation. We need to transform this reality and develop a Plan so as to reduce the use of pesticides in the country that doesn't stop increasing every year. It should be a Plan that, as long as the consumption of agrochemicals/pesticides decreases, develops an agro-ecological agriculture. We do hereby propose/suggest one in that sense/respect for the next government.

1- Foundation / Basis

The toxic nature of agrochemicals / pesticides

Agrochemicals are used in the agricultural production to try to eradicate plants that grow among the cultivated ones (herbicides) and to kill insects or fungi that attack the crop (insecticides and fungicides). These agrochemicals are poisons. They are all designed to kill living beings and have proven effects on human cells. Many of them are already classified as carcinogenic by WHO and exert hormonal and immunological disruption, generate reproductive disorders, intellectual development disorders in children and symptoms of acute irritation. They are agrototoxic/pesticides and every effort should be made to avoid contact with people.

High and growing consumption

In/ During the last 30 years, the amount of liters of pesticides applied throughout the country has increased continually. According to data from the Chambers of pesticides/ agrototoxic companies, in 1990, 38 million liters were applied and in 2018 more than 500 million liters were consumed. During this time, the cultivated area increased over 50% (from 20 million to 32 million hectares) but the increase in the consumption of pesticides is more than 1000%. This is due to the fact that this production model/patern depends on chemicals, because both plants, insects and fungi adapt slowly to agrotoxics/pesticides with which they are attack, and after a few years they become resistant. They are no longer damaged before their dusting/spraying/fumigation. Thus, the response of the model is to increase the dose of the pesticides/ agrotoxics and / or to mix it with other similar molecules. In 1996 when soybean began to be cultivated, 3 liters of glyphosate were applied per hectare and now, in order to achieve the same effect, they are spraying with 10 or 12 liters per hectare, mixed with 2 liters of 2.4D per year and other herbicides. **This continuous**

increase in the consumption of pesticides undoubtedly benefits multinational pesticide companies that invoice more each year and become essential actors/characters of this model.

Pollution of land, rivers, rain and underground water / groundwater

The problem is that this huge amount of agrottoxins/pesticides are accumulated in our environment, and they are molecules that remain active for a long time. The glyphosate is active for more than 60 days and we collect it from the rainwater (that is, water in the atmospheric air), from all the rivers of the central and northern area of the country. INTA even collects it from the water of underground waters in Pergamino and it pollutes the water of the drinking water network. This pollution grows year by year. When the environment is saturated/collapsed with these products, the degradation time becomes slower since, for example, glyphosate is degraded by the action of soil bacteria which it previously exterminated and, those that remain, have an hard task.

Population exposition of agricultural areas and food contamination / pollution

The environmental pollution contacts the population of these places directly with the agrottoxins, pesticides, that is to say that the people are exposed to the agrottoxins/pesticides and run the risk that these ones affect their health. At a national level, the exposition to pesticides is 11.9 liters per person per year. However, it is much higher for those living in agricultural areas. In the soybean area, the exposition of the inhabitants of towns such as Monte Maíz, is 121 liters per person for all pesticides and 80 liters for glyphosate.



The risk of these populations to suffer cancer, congenital malformations, death at birth, spontaneous abortions, high blood pressure at pregnancy, hypothyroidism, asthma, ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), autism spectrum disorders, and poor school performance in children; degenerative neurological diseases such as Alzheimer, Parkinson, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, multiple sclerosis in adults. Depression is more serious than in the general population and it is checked in studies/analysis done by the worthy science.

In addition to this environmental-residential exhibition/exposition, the agrochemicals/pesticides used in multiple crops, contaminate food (fruits, vegetables, legumes, bread, sugar, wine, beer, dairy products, meat, etc.), as verified in studies done by SENASA itself, producing risk of damage to health due to food exposition to pesticides.

Good farming/ agricultural practices

The only response of agribusiness and the national government has been to propose/suggest a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program that only seeks to improve the population's perception about current agricultural practices, but it legitimizes spraying schools and small cities without any protection whatsoever and does not consider reducing Agro poison use. GAPs are impossible to apply when the volumes of use are as high as those applied in Argentina. The State and its institutions are responsible for this serious problem and should solve it as from public policies.

Crops without agrottoxics / pesticides

It is possible to grow without poisons and the demand for pesticide-free products is growing worldwide and in our country. The US imports corn and organic soybeans because its production is much lower than its demand. In 2016, Argentina registered 3.1 million "certified" organic hectares and it is in fact the second largest organic producer in the world after Australia. At least 10% of the cultivated area in the country is from non-agrotoxic/pesticides crops, because there are tens of thousands of uncertified hectares in the hands of family producers with agroecological experiences. It is possible to grow without agrottoxics/pesticides and advance/go forward in an Agroecological Transition with benefit for public health, for the environment, for consumers and to maintain or even increase the economic and social benefits. The National Network of Agroecological Municipalities/Local Councils (RENAMA) already has 85,000 hectares cultivated without even a drop of pesticides in the urban shelter/protection areas of 14 villages of Buenos Aires and Entre Rios Provinces with very good results.

Brazilian medical organizations such as **ABRASCO** and the **Brazilian Pediatric Society** are proposing/suggesting a law that defines a **National Policy for the Reduction of the Use of Agrottoxics/Pesticides** in that country. While France launched its **ECOPHYTO Plan** in 2008 to reduce the use and contamination/pollution with PHYTOpharmaceuticals (agrottoxics/pesticides), a plan that has been consolidating and set as its goal to reduce by 50% the volume of agrottoxins/pesticides that France consumes in 2025. France consumes 60 million liters of agrottoxics/pesticides while Argentina applies more than 500 million in its territory/land. Other countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium develop successful programs in order to reduce their contamination/pollution with pesticides.

The Organizations linked/related to collective/public health, the environment, food sovereignty, agroecology, peasant movements and Human rights believe that it is URGENT to launch a REDUCTION PLAN FOR THE USE OF AGROTOXICS/PESTICIDES in the country. So we suggested the following:

2- Objectives/ Goals

The objective of this proposal is to reduce the availability, access and use of agrochemicals gradually and continuously, in order to reduce/diminish/shorten the exposition in the Argentine population, especially in agricultural areas and **thus reduce the risk and damage/harm for the collective/public health.**

Likewise, the objective is to simultaneously reconvert agricultural practices from a sustained matrix in the use of agrochemicals towards an agriculture free of poisons and agroecological.

3- Tools

This Policy for the Reduction of the Use of Agrotoxins/pesticides has two main tools:

1- The reduction of the use of agrotoxins/pesticides will be stimulated/fostered through a **National Program for the Reduction of Agrotoxins/Pesticides**, which is complemented by a **National Regulation of Restriction of Use of Agrotoxic/Pesticides** (limitation of use of some molecules, the form of application and specific restrictions).

2 - Agriculture without poisons will be promoted/fostered through a **National Program to foster Agroecology**, so that, as the use of agrochemicals/pesticides decreases, the yields with agroecological practices are maintained in a transition process that includes livestock.

These two programs are complementary and simultaneous. The voluntary adhesion/support of the farmers will be sought, but the Restriction Regulations are mandatory for everyone.

4- National Agrotoxic/Pesticides Reduction Program

The National Program for the Reduction of Agrotoxins/Pesticides has incentive instruments for the Non-Use of Agrotoxins/Pesticides for producers to join the Program. It is complemented with technical assistance from INTA and university agronomic extension to sustain the production without pesticides. It also has specific compliance goals.

a- Incentives for Non-Use of Agrotoxins / Pesticides

- 1- Producers can join the Program with the commitment to reduce a percentage equal to or more than 30% of the volume used the previous year or not to use agrotoxins/pesticides. Under those conditions, they will be eligible for bank loans at 30% rates lower than those available to conventional agricultural producers.
- 2- The retention regime for soybean, corn and wheat will be reduced up to 50% **when no agrotoxins/pesticides are used** in their cultivation.
- 3- The fuels, seeds and further expenses of the crop (except for the fields rents) will be exempt from VAT payment when the production is completely free of pesticides.

- 4- There will be a difference in the interest rates practised in rural credit areas for agricultural practices of an agro-ecological or organic nature, which are necessarily lower (up to 50% in those that do not use agrotoxics/pesticides) than those applied in conventional production systems , for the purchase of machinery and other tools.
- 5- To eliminate subsidies, exemptions and other incentives in the economic, financial and fiscal laws applicable to imports, production and marketing of agrochemicals/pesticides.
- 6- To promote adjustments in the tax legislation that stimulate/foster research, development, production and marketing of products of clean production, agroecological, organic or biological control.

The last phase of the ECOPHYTO Plan in France was from incentives to apply penalties if producers do not effectively reduce the consumption of pesticides by at least 20%. Maybe they are not necessary in this initial phase of this plan.

b- Reduction Program Goals:

1-First goal: for the year 2021: To maintain or reduce the liters equivalent to kilos of pesticides consumed nationally at the level reached in 2019. The first goal is to prevent in two years the use of pesticides in the country to continue increasing.

2-Second Goal: To decrease by 30% the volume in liters equivalent to kilos of agrochemicals / pesticides used in the country for the end of the season 2024-2025 (April 2025), that is, in 5 years.

3-Third Goal: To decrease, with respect to the agrochemicals/pesticides used in 2025 by 50% after 5 years (between 2025 and 2030).

c- National Regulation of Restriction of Use of Agrotoxic /Pesticides

It is established with force of Law:

- 1- In identical terms to Directive 128/09 Section 9 of the European Parliament, aerial spraying is prohibited. The prohibition will be absolutely in force as from May 2021. Until then, air spaying will only be allowed to more than 2000 meters from populated/inhabited areas or rural schools.
- 2- Agrotoxins/Pesticides of Toxicological category Ia and Ib (Red band and yellow band) are absolutely prohibited.
- 3- The use of any pesticides is prohibited, under any type of mechanism or application technique, around one thousand (1000) meters of homes, schools, water resources,

environmentally protected areas and production areas of ecological or agroecological agriculture.

- 4- The preparations/supply and silos that are within villages and cities will have a maximum term of 2 years to be taken outside them.
- 5- The deposits and agrochemicals shops that are in populated/inhabited areas of villages and cities, have a period of 1 year to be removed from them. / close.
- 6- Mosquito type spray machines cannot circulate/be used in populated/inhabited areas in any condition whatsoever.

5- National Program of Stimulation to Agroecology

1- To establish a national fund to support the monitoring of the impacts of pesticides on the environment and health, for technical training, for the spreading of education in organic production techniques and agroecological bases for social participation. The Fund that will finance the Program for the Reduction of the Use of Agrotoxins/Pesticides and the Stimulus Program for Agroecology will be formed with 0.2% of the total national withholdings applied to all agricultural exports of the country.

2- INTA will establish a Technical Area in order to advise in agroecology for producers who join the reduction program. Together with the Agronomy Schools of national universities, they will cover the entire country to reach all producers. The technical areas of the program will be complemented with social organizations such as the National Agrarian Forum and further organizations.

3 - The municipalities/local councils of the fumigated/sprayed areas may join the Program for the Reduction of Use and in coordination with the technical areas, may sustain the areas of environmental protection/shelter in the periphery/suburbs/outskirts of the towns free of applications and with production free of agrottoxics/pesticides.

4 - The current experiences of agriculture without poisons such as RENAMA and others, will be the main basis for the development of this program.

5- Stimuli/encouragement/incentives will be established for the production and distribution of inputs to agroecology (seeds, fertilizers and organic biocides, etc.), which will make their access easy to producers.

5- Participation and Social Control.

The following planned measures will be taken in order to guarantee access to information, participation and social control, to reduce the use of agrochemicals/pesticides and the development of sustainable, ecological and agroecological technologies.

- a. To improve information mechanisms for the population with appropriate language for different audiences, using audiovisual media, including the national computer network and social networks.
- b. To guarantee consumers the right to information about the presence of genetically modified organisms - GMO in food. **To label food that contain GMO and those that contain pesticides residues regardless of their concentration.**
- c. To spread the information about studies and tests on agrotoxics/pesticides and genetically modified organisms - GMO, which contain evaluations/assessment and reevaluations, making the processes clear in decision-making about the granting/issue of registrations.
- d. To review the social control mechanisms of CONABIA, to ensure participation and debate about its procedures and deliberations.
- e. In SENASA, to open the risk reassessment/evaluation instance of the 15 most used pesticides in the country, guaranteeing the participation and popular control. Besides, the classification of danger will not exclusively consider its acute toxic effects, but also those of medium and long term, the carcinogens/carcinogenetic effect, harmful effects on reproduction and those of endocrine/endocrinal disruption.

6- Other/Further measures

- a- Implementation of the traceability system for the production and distribution of agrochemicals/pesticides.
- b- Implementation of a Register of Applications of Agrotoxics/Pesticides in the territory of a mandatory nature and under the responsibility of the Government Environment areas and not that of agriculture.
- c- Implementation of a **public health sanitary surveillance/ security system** for populations exposed to agrochemicals/pesticides, strengthening the sanitary/health, epidemiological, occupational and environmental surveillance with the participation of fumigated/sprayed neighborhood organizations.

Reduction Plan for the Use of Agrotoxic/Pesticides at the Provincial and Municipal Level

We do not need to wait for this Reduction Plan to become a Public Policy to be able to develop it at the local and municipal level or even at the provincial level. At this time, agroecology experiences are already being developed in the peri-urban lots/batches of many villages, where fumigation/spraying was also prohibited by ordinance/law in the proximity/nearness of populated areas. There the municipalities/local councils hired agronomists to grow without agrotoxics/pesticides like those of RENAMA or the extensionists/extensions of agricultural schools.

The provinces can also promote this agriculture that reduces the use of agro poisons while they legislate protecting the rights to health and the population life.

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Organizations Proposing the NATIONAL PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF THE USE OF AGROTOXICS

Red Universitaria de Ambiente y Salud / Médicos de Pueblos Fumigados

FESPROSA (Federación Sindical de Profesionales de la Salud)

Red Federal de Docentes por la Vida

RENAMA (Red Nacional de Municipios y Comunidades que Fomentan la Agroecología).

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