

Presentation of the Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides (SNAP) to the Regina City Council about the Motion to Regulate the Non-essential (Cosmetic) Use of Pesticides

by Paule Hjertaas, President and spokesperson of SNAP, the Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides.

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Thank you for allowing the Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides (Snap Inc) to speak today in favour of a pesticide bylaw in Regina.

I have suffered severe health issues from pesticide exposure, repeatedly making me sick for several days at a time. This led to me researching the health and environmental effects of pesticide use. As a result of this research, and my health condition, I became an advocate for alternatives to pesticides. I founded SNAP in order to collate the results of my studies, and provide a way of informing people on those topics as well as pesticide alternatives available.

Twice before, SNAP has spoken to the city of Regina in support of a pesticide bylaw, in 2002 and 2012. I have links to the previous documents and presentations on SNAP web site (1)

The City of Regina set up an IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Committee from 2004 to 2007 which managed to accomplish little to nothing in the realm of pesticide reduction. I described it as “the blind leading the blind” and it was disbanded after 3 years.(3) This result unfortunately matches other IPM efforts and results. (10,11,12)

Then Regina hired a Parks director with prior experience in these cultural approaches to weed and insect control and the administration culture began to change. This resulted in a significant decrease in all pesticide use and I can now use the parks most of the time to the exclusion of Wascana, which still seems to spray as much as before.

How far has Regina come? When I started requesting a pesticide bylaw in Regina, city staff only responded to complaints and there were a lot more about weeds than spraying. Now, we can see a massive change in the city’s direction through its Official Community Plan, with the park administration’s approach, as well as in the public. The native plant garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum is popular, as is its annual plant sale. There is increasing popular concern about pollinators and wildlife. More natural products are available at retailers such as corn gluten meal and even organic manure. People want pollinator gardens. People are concerned that the bedding plants they purchase have been treated with neonicotinoids that would kill their pollinators. Some large retailers have responded by offering neonic-free plants. It seems to me that citizen awareness is there and all we need now is a push to educate people on these alternatives and ensure that natural lawn care services are available.

Councillor Stadnichuk’s motion is striking in that it does not question the effects of pesticides on wildlife, pets, people and the environment. It states them as facts in whereases 3 and 4, facts that are backed up by hundreds if not thousands of studies. It also builds on Regina’s current commitment to environmental sustainability, health, and well-being through its to Official Community Plan (whereas 2). Also noted are the therefores of the motion. Councillor Stadnichuk is not asking for someone to go

plagiarize the home page of the PMRA web site to justify current pesticide use. No. She is asking for review of the research on how the elimination of cosmetic pesticides protects our biodiversity, especially birds and pollinators like bees and butterflies. The SNAP web site has a large wildlife section (5) with research on negative effects of pesticides on wildlife and on on bee die-off (6). I would be happy to help with this research if needed. There is no mention of researching the effects of pesticides on human health. In case anyone wants to know, the SNAP web site also has an extensive section of human health effects.(9) Also requested is that the administration summarize the best practices in Canada to maintain green spaces and yards without the cosmetic use of pesticides; that would mean going to other municipalities who have been successful with these methods such as Toronto, Halifax, Peterborough, etc. One can even talk to the Mr Yeaman, P.A. park director, who has even tried a steam weeder to replace Roundup uses. Once more, the SNAP web site has resources under alternatives and programs (7,8)

In conclusion, there is so much overwhelming evidence of the harm caused by pesticides to people, wildlife, pollinators and the environment, that we are now taking that harm for granted. There are now many municipalities with successful chemical-free programs and bylaws that Regina only has to ask to share others' experience. Regina has also already started educating through the City of Regina Pests and Wildlife page (4).

We've taken the first steps. Let's finish the journey.

I am happy to answer any questions on any topic mentioned above.

Thank you.

References:

1. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/issues/bylaws/provincial/Saskatchewan>
2. www.snapinfo.ca
3. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/issues/integrated-pest-management-ipm> /Regina
4. [City of Regina Pests and Wildlife page](#) (2021) https://www.regina.ca/home-property/tree-yard/pests-wildlife/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=protectourtrees&fbclid=IwAR2-1p8TAQwocC1URPbSjhm-tg9EknKcbmYgUbWSSqJ8Aw6_8R8p4PxT9RY
5. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/info/wildlife-section/insects> also pages on birds, aquatic organisms, mammals, endangered species, etc.
6. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/issues/bee-die-off>
7. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/info/alternatives-to-pesticides>, several pages for insects, weeds, diseases, mammals
8. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/programs/programs> under Organic Land Care Training for Municipal Officials or Transitioning Landscapers, a presentation I gave to the *Green Trades* conference in November 2010.
9. <https://www.snapinfo.ca/info/health> with many pages on most body systems.
10. **Did Ontario Golf Courses reduce pesticide use with Integrated Pest Management?** (*Prevent Cancer Now*, November 2020) <https://preventcancer.ca/did-ontario-golf-courses-reduce-pesticide-use-with-integrated-pest-management/>
11. In April 2003, Quebec was the first province to regulate the use and sales of cosmetic pesticides, when it introduced the Quebec Pesticides Management Code. The May 1991 cosmetic pesticide bylaw

by the town of Hudson was the first cosmetic pesticide bylaw in Canada. The 2001 [Spraytech v Hudson](#) case set the precedent in the [Supreme Court of Canada](#) as regards the enforcement of municipal by-laws against pesticides. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pesticides_in_Canada#cite_note-14)

Presumably to avoid further bylaws, the lawn care industry claimed to be using IPM which would bring a reduction in pesticide use. Unfortunately for them, the Quebec Government keeps track of pesticide sales. The government data indicated an increased pesticide use during that period, rather than a decrease. (personal communication, Michel Gaudet)

12. <https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2021/10/ipm-integrated-pest-management-fails-to-stop-toxic-pesticide-use/> “The research team, all of whom have worked as IPM scientists and proponents, seems to mourn that IPM has “lost its way” over the decades — moving from ecological and health concerns as primary to its current state, in which (usually chemical) control methods are central. **They note**, “In cases where the concept of ecology is used in IPM, environmentalism is referenced more often than ecology, i.e., the aim to reduce negative environmental impacts, rather than using ecological processes to replace chemical pesticides.”