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READING PESTICIDE LABELS

This Clover Safe note is intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and staff.



Pesticide exposures to the skin may result in rashes, sores, and/or boils. More serious medical exposures may result if pesticides are inadvertently inhaled or swallowed. Reading and following information presented on a pesticide label is an effective method for preventing unintentional exposures to pesticides.

4-H members under the age of 18 should never use pesticides as part of 4-H activities. Pesticides shall only be used by adult volunteers or UC staff members.

Pesticide labels should always be read each time before you purchase, mix, or apply pesticides. Label instructions can change and anyone can be a bit forgetful sometimes.

California 4-H YDP encourages the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods as an alternative to the use of pesticides in the control of pests. Further information about University of California IPM can be found at: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>.

The important sections of a pesticide label are as follows:

Common Names and Chemical Names are names that manufacturers use to easily identify pesticides and accurately describe the chemistry of pesticides, respectively.

EPA Registration Number tells the user that the EPA has reviewed the product and that it can be used at relatively low risk if the label instructions are followed.

Active Ingredients are the pesticide chemicals that terminate or control the targeted pest(s).

Signal Words are - *Caution, Warning, or Danger* and indicate the pesticides potential for making an exposed person sick:

Caution – the label used on pesticides that are least harmful when exposed to people.

Warning – the label used on pesticides that are more poisonous than pesticides with a Caution label.

Danger – the label used on pesticides that are more poisonous or irritating than pesticides with a Warning label and should be used with extreme care.

Note: due to the increased hazard, 4-H volunteers or staff should never use pesticides with the signal words “Warning” or “Danger”

Precautionary Statements describes personal protective equipment such as eye protection or the use of gloves or provides warning statements about where pesticide treatments have been applied and for people stay out of treatment areas for specified periods of time.

Environmental Hazards provide information about whether the pesticide is harmful to the environment, wildlife, fish, wetlands, endangered species, etc.

Directions for Use gives information about what types of pests the product should be used against and what rates the product should be applied.

First Aid Information describes how to give first aid to someone that has been inadvertently exposed to the pesticide. Additional actions may include contacting a doctor or local poison center or transporting a pesticide exposure victim to an emergency medical center. If so, then always take the pesticide label with you.

Pesticide Storage and Disposal describes keeping pesticides in their original containers and out of the reach of children in a locked storage cabinet. Pesticides should be disposed as described on the label and if you aren't able to finish using a pesticide, you should contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner's Office for advice about how to dispose of small amounts of left over pesticides.