

Atrazine Enhanced Monitoring

- Atrazine is being reviewed as part of a reregistration process where older pesticides are being reviewed to meet current health and environmental safety standards. The new standards include a more stringent protection level for children.
- As a result of this reregistration process, U.S. EPA has an agreement with Syngenta, a manufacturer of atrazine, to increase monitoring of certain community water systems in areas of atrazine use. This testing has been ongoing for years and will be enhanced in selected watersheds so EPA can use the data for their reviews of atrazine. In Ohio, the last 20 years of data show a decline in the amount of atrazine in Ohio watersheds. This is attributed to application changes that have been made on the pesticide label.
- The enhanced monitoring will test the water before it enters the community's water treatment rather than when the water is ready for consumption. EPA has designed an alert system that will address any instance where atrazine is above the level acceptable for drinking water. Risk mitigation measures will also be taken in these situations.
- There about 200 sites chosen from across the U.S. for enhanced monitoring. These are watersheds that have regular atrazine usage. Ohio will potentially have only about 10% of these sites. These selected sites are considered to have soil types and land uses that would initiate the need for additional monitoring. There are eight sites that are considered top priority, none of which are in Ohio.
- The results of the monitoring will determine label changes regarding instructions to pesticide applicators. The atrazine label already has set-back requirements from surface water and wells to ensure environmental protection. The enhanced monitoring will provided additional information for the label and other mitigation measures that may be needed.

Atrazine Facts

- Primarily used to control weeds in corn, atrazine was first registered in the late 1950's. Atrazine is also used on other crops to control weeds including Christmas trees and pasture land.
- Atrazine is economical for family farms to use to control weeds and increase their corn crop. Weeds compete with the corn, causing the corn to grow slowly and produce less. Farmers rely on products like atrazine to help sustain their crops and production.
- Atrazine is recognized by the U.S. EPA as not likely to be a carcinogen. There is concern that atrazine has been associated with causing imbalances in hormone levels in laboratory animals. There have been studies on the effects of atrazine on the reproductive development of amphibians (frogs). These studies are still ongoing and under debate in the research community.