



# Migrant Farmworkers' Exposure to Pesticides and What Is Being

Done Legally

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## Introduction

This is inspired by an excerpt from Helena Maria Viramontes' book *Under the Feet of Jesus*. The purpose of my research is to dig deeper into this issue and discover what is currently being done to protect these individuals and inform them of the risks.

## Research Question

What are the effects of pesticide exposure and what is being done to protect farmworkers in California?

## Methods

The information that I acquired on this subject came from reviewing articles on health effects of pesticides and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's (CDPR) website and training pamphlets.

## Finding 1

1. "Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are primarily ethnic minorities who are excluded from federal laws that protect other workers. Farmworkers live and work under substandard conditions that place them at increased risk of pesticide-related illness."  
(Moses, 1989)
2. "Agriculture uses 80% of all pesticides in the U.S. Handlers who mix, load and apply pesticides as well as workers cultivating and harvesting crops sprayed with them are at risk of acute poisoning or even death from their exposures. Drift and run-off of agricultural pesticides pollute the air, soil and water, creating additional hazards to workers' families, community residents, and the environment" (Moses, 1989)
3. "Chronic effects, including cancer in adults and children, adverse reproductive outcomes, delayed neuropathy and neurobehavioral effects, are also associated with occupational and environmental exposure to pesticides." (Moses, 1989)

## Finding 2

The protections I found in the state of California:  
-The California Department of Pesticide Regulation's pesticide information series A used in training workers who could be exposed to pesticides  
-Proposition 65 " Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act"

## Conclusions

The information that I acquired from the research I conducted left me with more questions on the subject than I started with. The main question I now have are how effective is the training program created by the CDPR and are employers properly upholding these trainings? Along with an interest in further study into the experiences of farmworkers, specifically with the protections against pesticides and the level to which their employers comply to the regulations of the CDPR .

## References

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- California Department of Pesticide Regulation. "Pesticides and Proposition 65." *Pesticides and Proposition 65*, California Environmental Protection Agency, [www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/prop65.htm](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/prop65.htm).
- "Chapter 2." *Under the Feet of Jesus*, by Viramontes Helena María, Penguin Books, 1996, pp. 76-77.
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