

# Agriculture & Pesticides Facts

## PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Ontario has a system of classifying pesticides that ensures that a pesticide is used only by people who need to use it and who know how to use it properly. All pesticides (including those available for home or garden use) are classified by the Ministry of the Environment into six Schedules depending on:

- their toxicity
- the extent to which they represent an environment hazard
- their persistence in the environment
- their concentration as marketed
- their intended use (e.g., are they meant to be used only on farm crops?)



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Pesticides in Schedules 1, 2 and 5 are available for agricultural use only, and may be purchased or applied only by Licensed Applicators and Certified Farmers. Pesticide vendors must not sell a pesticide in Schedule 1, 2 or 5 to anyone who has not been certified or licensed.

Pesticides in Schedules 3, 4 and 6 are available for use by the homeowner, as well as by farmers and exterminators. Licensing or certification is not required to purchase or use pesticides in Schedules 3, 4 and 6.

### ONTARIO PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Ontario Pesticide Education Program (OPEP), initiated in 1986, is a co-operative program of the Ontario Ministry Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, the University of Guelph, Ontario farm groups (through AGCare) and the pesticide manufacturing and distribution industries.

The program is designed to:

- provide education and training about the safe handling and use of pesticides for growers, dealers and licensed pest exterminators
- reduce health and safety risks for farmers, consumers and the environment
- promote environmental awareness and protection with respect to pesticide use
- reflect the concern of farmers, farm organizations, government, consumers and pesticide companies for the environment and for the health of the people of Ontario.

### THE GROWER PESTICIDE SAFETY COURSE

Under the Regulations of the Ontario Pesticide Act, Ontario farmers must be certified in order to buy Schedule 1, 2, or 5 agricultural pesticides or to use these pesticides on their land. Certification ensures that the farmers of Ontario know how to manage pesticides safely and in accordance with the Pesticide Act.

To become certified, farmers must complete the Grower Pesticide Safety Course and pass an examination based on that course. This course covers all of the aspects of pesticide selection, safety, application, storage, transportation and environmental impact that a grower must know in order to manage pesticides properly. Farmers must be re-certified every five years to ensure that their knowledge of the regulations and best management practices regarding pesticide use remains current.

More than 40,000 Ontario farmers have been certified in pesticide application and safety through the Grower Pesticide Safety Course since the program's inception. Approximately 27,000 are currently registered.

### PESTICIDE VENDOR CERTIFICATION COURSE

Only Certified Pesticide Vendors can sell Schedule 1, 2 or 5 agricultural pesticides in Ontario. To become a Certified Vendor, one must attend the two day Pesticide Vendor Certification Course and pass the PVCC exam. Each farm supply outlet selling agricultural pesticides must have at least one employee who has been certified within the last five years. Over 1,500 Ontario vendors are certified through the Pesticide Vendor Certification Course.

### LICENSED EXTERMINATORS

People applying pesticides for a fee must be Licensed Exterminators. This includes farmers who custom-apply pesticides for other farmers. Licensed Exterminators must complete a home-study course and certification exam through Ridgetown College, University of Guelph.

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### INTERNET RESOURCES:

**Ontario Pesticide Education Program**  
<http://www.ridgetownc.on.ca/opec/>