

Problems and Solutions to Pesticides' Availability

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The control of pests - to include insects, diseases and weeds - is a major problem to the small farmer. Unlike the large mono-crop growers of crops such as soybeans and corn, the small farmer must diversify with a variety of crops grown on small acreage. As with most businesses, the development and marketing of pest management tools are driven by economics. Therefore, research, product development, and marketing do not address the small farms.

Consequently, the lack of pest management tools severely contributes to the economic losses to the small farmer and the continued loss of the small family farms. This encourages the illegal use of pesticides, which can seriously affect the health of the human population, animals, and the environment.

To help address the pest management needs of the small farmer, various governmental and public agencies must seriously get involved. This will include universities and local, state, and federal governments, including the Environmental Protection Agency. Research, product development, and marketing must directly address the small farms with emphasis on integrated pest

management. Present and future registered pesticides must be packaged in small quantities that can be easily bought and utilized without excess. This will be economically feasible and at the same time discourage illegal uses and environmental contamination.

Another approach to make pesticides affordable and available to the small farmer is to encourage EPA pesticide manufacturers and local distributors to set up a possible "pharmaceutical" distribution system. In this way a small farmer can buy only needed quantities. In addition, the success of any pest management program will require increased educational emphasis.