



School Water Testing Project

United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service, Science and Technology
Pesticide Data Program (PDP)



Purpose: To test drinking water from schools/childcare facilities, which use onsite wells as their water source, for pesticide residues so that data may be used in risk assessments.

Background: Schools and childcare facilities with wells are subject to the Safe Drinking Water Act and their water is routinely tested for many chemical and biological contaminants. Required testing includes 23 pesticides for which EPA has established maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). The EPA requirement does not include testing for breakdown products of these pesticides; and, in groundwater pesticide breakdown products are those most commonly occurring forms of pesticides.

The Pesticide Data Program monitoring effort is an attempt to collect data on the prevalence of over 100 pesticide residues, including parent pesticide and breakdown products, at ultra-low levels (parts-per-trillion). This program is testing water at these very low levels in order to obtain real-life data in contrast to data generated by computer simulation models.

What is Involved: PDP requests to have a sample of water (three 1-liter glass bottles) collected. The sample will be sent via Federal Express overnight to the laboratory for analysis. This is a one-time effort. Analytical results will be provided to the facility. It takes roughly 90 days to receive results due to the number of analytes and the low levels being tested.

Cost: PDP is covering all costs of analysis, sampling kits, and pre-paid shipping labels. This is an opportunity for SDWA administrators or other State/county entities to collaborate with USDA PDP to obtain data that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. PDP requests assistance with sample collection and in return, will share the data with the assisting agency.

Participation: Participation in this monitoring effort is voluntary.

The data collected will be published in the PDP Annual Summary but school names will be kept confidential and will not be published. Each school will be identified only by State and coupled with an arbitrary number (e.g. VA 5501).

Information: For more information about the Pesticide Data Program see www.ams.usda.gov/pdp or call (703) 330-2300 X131.

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