



Agency for Toxic Substances  
and Disease Registry  
Atlanta GA 30333

August 15, 2016

Mr. Pat Gegen  
4015 Waha Road  
Kalaheo, Hawai'i 96741

Dear Mr. Gegen:

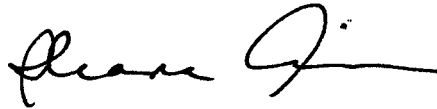
Thank you for your October 2014 letter in which you highlighted your and other community members' environmental health concerns associated with pesticide use on the crop fields at Kaua'i, Hawai'i. You indicated that the agricultural companies utilize a large amount and variety of pesticides for the seed crop research and development (primarily corn) near the Kaua'i west side communities (i.e., Waimea Valley between Ele'ele and Mana/Pacific Missile Range Facility). In addition, you stated the local communities may be experiencing adverse and abnormally high number of health issues that the local community members attribute to the pesticides being used on genetically modified organisms (GMO)/crops (e.g., congenital heart defects birth defects, respiratory problems, carcinoid syndrome).

Enclosed with this letter, we provide our summary of the currently available information relevant to your health concerns, and explain why we cannot conduct a scientific evaluation that would determine whether people near the crop fields are being exposed to pesticides at levels of health concern. As noted in the enclosure, it is very challenging to demonstrate scientifically whether people near agricultural fields are being exposed to pesticides at levels of health concern. The application of agricultural pesticides tends to vary considerably (e.g., type being applied, when applications are conducted, length of application time, and geographical location of the application) and is influenced by weather (e.g., wind direction and speed). These variations contribute to the inability of environmental air monitoring programs to accurately define the extent of a community's exposures to agricultural pesticides. In addition, most modern pesticides used on crops tend to degrade fairly rapidly in the environment, which significantly shortens the window for collecting environmental samples that might provide an accurate picture. Accordingly, ATSDR will not conduct any public health assessment activities specifically about the pesticide use on the crop fields at Kaua'i, Hawai'i.

During our review of your request, we did identify a need for providing environmental health education to the local healthcare providers. We will work with the Hawai'i Department of Health to provide the local professional healthcare community with an opportunity to learn more about environmental contaminants and their potential health impacts on local communities.

Thank you for forwarding your concerns to ATSDR and bringing them to our attention. Should you have any question about how ATSDR evaluated your petition, please contact Dr. Sven E. Rodenbeck, Division of Community Health Investigations Petition Coordinator or Ms. Libby Vianu, ATSDR Region IX Representative. Dr. Rodenbeck may be reached at (770) 488-3660 or via email at [SRodenbeck@cdc.gov](mailto:SRodenbeck@cdc.gov). Ms. Vianu may be reached at (415) 947-4319 or via email at [ljl8@cdc.gov](mailto:ljl8@cdc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ileana Arias". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "I" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ileana Arias, PhD  
Director  
Division of Community Health Investigations  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Enclosure

Cc:  
Dr. Barbara Brooks, Hawai'i Department of Health  
Fenix Grange, Hawai'i Department of Health