

Why the Toxic Taters Coalition?

Central and Northwestern Minnesota are home to over 45,000 acres of potatoes. Fungicides are sprayed on 98% of those acres. At the height of the growing season spraying can happen as much as every 3-7 days.

Crop producers, like the potato giant R.D. Offutt (RDO), are not currently mandated to tell the public what chemicals they are using. What we do know for sure is that not all of the chemicals stay in the potato fields. Pesticide drift impacts neighboring farms, schools, homes and communities. The environment is damaged. People get sick and sometimes die from over exposure to harmful chemicals.

What We Are Asking RDO To Do:

1. Cut their use of hazardous pesticides significantly
2. Release information about what chemicals they are applying
3. Fund an independent public human and ecological health study on the effects on impacted communities near potato production
4. Transition to third-party certified environmentally sound sustainable production practices

Who We Are

About Us

The Toxic Taters Coalition is a multigenerational Native and non-Native, grassroots community group that organizes people to advocate for themselves, as a community, to protect our land, air, water, and lives from poisons spread in Minnesota through chemically intensive potato farming.

Contact Us

Phone: 218-375-2600 or 218-850-3629

Email: tatercoordinator@gmail.com

Web: www.toxictaters.org



TOXIC TATERS COALITION

*The Dangers of
Pesticide Drift and
How to Respond*



Toxic Taters Coalition
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What is Pesticide Drift?

The EPA defines pesticide drift as the movement of pesticide dust or droplets through the air at the time of application or soon after, to any site other than the area intended.

Why Is Pesticide Drift Important?

According to the EPA pesticide drift of sprays and dusts can affect people's health and the environment, and damage nearby crops.

Health and Environmental Risks

Pesticide drift can pose health risks to the surrounding environment, animals, and people when sprays and dusts are carried by the wind and deposited on other areas.

Immediate effects may include burning skin and eyes, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, difficulty breathing, headache, and dizziness. Long term conditions may include asthma, fatigue, depression, increased chemical sensitivity, neurological impairments, infertility, miscarriage, birth defects, and some cancers.

Economic Effects

Pesticide drift can cause economic loss. Up to 70 million pounds of pesticides active ingredients are wasted annually in the U.S.

Crops damaged by drift are often not able to be sold if the drifting pesticide is not registered for use on that crop.

State, local, and Federal agencies receive many complaints and must put resources into responding to concerns

What to Do If You Are Impacted by Drift:

1. Call the MN Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) **immediately** to report the incident. 651-201-6333 (M-F 8am to 4pm or 1-800-422-0798 after 4pm). Reports must also be made in writing.
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/chemicals/pesticides/complaints/misusecomplaints.aspx>
2. On the White Earth Indian Reservation call the White Earth Natural Resources Pesticide Coordinator 218-935-2488 ext. 2115
3. Call a doctor **immediately and report exposure, even if you believe a doctor cannot do anything to help.** Ask to have your report put in your medical file. Ask what medical remedies are available and what symptoms you should watch for.
4. If people were exposed to drift, put any clothing worn at the time of exposure into an airtight plastic bag and put the bag in the freezer. Provide this bag to the MDA or White Earth investigator.
5. Document everything in writing including dates, times, and as much detail as you are able as soon as possible.
6. Call Toxic Taters at 218-375-2600 or 218-850-3629 for more information in continuing to address this issue.
7. Call the EPA Region 5 **immediately** to report the incident (312) 353-2000 / (800) 621-8431.



What Records to Keep:

If you experience drift, write down *everything* you notice during and after the incident.

1. Date, time, and details of the incident
2. Weather (wind direction and speed/strength, precipitation at the time of drift and between drift and sampling, and temperature)
3. Odors in the air (e.g. sweet, sulfur, skunk, other)
4. Affected crops and land, with photos
5. Pesticide applicator name, contact information, prior notification, spray plane description, FAA registration number
6. Owner of land intentionally sprayed and type of crops sprayed
7. Who was affected; how they were exposed; symptoms; any medical attention sought
8. Chemical compounds involved
9. Organic certifier test results and notification information (if you are an organic grower)
10. Minnesota Department of Agriculture Investigation—dates, times, samples, test results, orders, investigation case file (after release)
11. White Earth Natural Resources Investigation—dates, times, samples, test results, orders, investigation case file (after release)
12. Potentially provable damages (value of crop ordered destroyed, documented loss of sales, loss of organic certification, response costs)
13. All documents and correspondence, including email, related to the drift incident.

*Note- Different records are needed to document health impacts, damage to conventional and organic crops. When in doubt, keep all your records and communications.. It is important that anyone affected by drift maintain complete records.

