



PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 18:00 September 30th 2004

**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION**

KIMO LAUNCHES NEW GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE TO REDUCE PESTICIDE USE

KIMO, the international environmental organisation representing 128 coastal local authorities in 10 northern European countries, has launched the second in a series of Good Practice Guides which will encourage local authorities and other public agencies to implement more environmentally friendly methods to reduce harmful toxic substances getting into the aquatic environment. The aim of the project is to show local authorities the best possible methods of reducing pesticide usage whilst maintaining a reasonable level of weed control. The Good Practice Guide should assist local authorities in reducing and eliminating pesticide usage, if possible, through: -

- Completing an audit of current practices
- Indicating ways to alter practices to reduce usage
- Assessing potential environmental problems arising from using chemical control
- Researching non-chemical alternatives
- Reviewing current purchasing policies
- Producing a risk assessment
- Producing a pesticide policy

Pesticides have been in use for over half a century. They have intrinsic properties of toxicity and persistence and can have adverse effects on marine life resulting in potential hazards to public health.

The Good Practice Guide consists of a Checklist and accompanying Manual which are available from KIMO in hard copy. The Guide will shortly be available in pdf format from the KIMO website at www.kimointernational.org

In a statement issued today a KIMO spokesperson stated, *“The production of this Guide fulfils several of KIMO prime objectives namely, leading by example and exchanging information on effective pollution prevention. The issue of toxic substances entering into the marine environment is very*

important and we believe that this Guide will provide information and guidance that, if acted upon, can contribute to the reduction of this type of pollution.”

Background

Synthetic chemical pesticides have been in use for nearly half a century in the control of agricultural, public health, amenity and industrial areas. Pesticides are the only group of chemicals that are designed to be toxic to living organisms and are intentionally dispersed in the environment. The result of their extensive use over the years has been manifested in many ways including the reduction of farmland biodiversity. One of the main sources of hazardous substances in the marine environment is a result of inputs from diffuse sources, in particular run off from agricultural land, industrial sites and built up areas. These chemicals in the marine environment can have an adverse effect on marine life and can affect the food chain resulting in a potential hazard to public health.

Awareness of the potential hazards associated with pesticides has existed since the early 1960's and much has been done to control the trade and use of pesticides. The use of some pesticide types has diminished considerably over the years due to resistance, phasing out and bans, however the continual introduction of new pesticides has resulted in no overall reduction in the total usage. Moreover, whilst some of the health and environmental problems associated with pesticides have been addressed in the developed world, many of these serious problems continue to plague the people and the environments of the developing world. The World Health Organisation states that around three million people suffer from pesticide poisoning each year (*Pesticide Action Network, 2002*).

Pesticides have intrinsic properties of toxicity and persistence. There is clear evidence that a diverse range of natural and man-made substances, including banned TBT and PCB's, have a potential to impair the reproductive process in aquatic organisms. For example, some substances can interfere with the endocrine systems of marine animals and studies have shown that these effects can occur at very low concentrations. They are also liable to bioaccumulate in the food chain and thus may have adverse effects on public health. Pesticides currently in use may also have similar endocrine disrupting effects.

KIMO Background

KIMO is an international association of Local Authorities and associated organisations, which was formally founded in Esbjerg, Denmark, in August 1990 to work towards cleaning up pollution in the North Sea. The idea for the organisation originally came from Vågsøy Kommune in Norway. Vågsøy had been concerned since 1985 about the proposals for further nuclear fuel reprocessing at Dounreay, which they saw as a threat to their fishing industry. The widespread seal deaths in the North Sea in 1988 and the spread of toxic algae bloom up the west coast of Norway in the same year brought home to them that the threats to marine life in the North Sea extended well beyond radioactive discharges. They also realised that any action taken to clean up the North Sea could only be effective if it was co-ordinated on an international basis and decided to contact some other local authorities to form a nucleus of an international group.

The other founder members - Shetland Islands Council, Grampian Regional Council and Esbjerg City Council - were selected at that time on the basis that they shared with Vågsøy a common interest in protecting their fishing industries. From this modest localised start KIMO has grown in size and in terms of its aims and objectives. It now has over 128 members in the UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Faeroe Islands, The Netherlands and The Republic of Ireland with associate members in Germany and the Isle of Man representing over 5 million people. Its remit now includes the Irish Sea and the North East Atlantic.

For more information contact, Mr Rick Nickerson, Secretariat, c/o Shetland Islands Council, Infrastructure Services, Grantfield, Lerwick,

ZE1 ONT Tel 00 44 (0) 1595 744800 Fax 00 44 (0) 1595 695887 e-mail
kimo@zetnet.co.uk website <http://www.zetnet.co.uk/coms/kimo>
11004pruk.doc