

Leading Food Producers Say No to Syngenta Bestseller Paraquat

One of the key products of the Swiss agrochemical company Syngenta is increasingly losing ground in the pesticide market. Today, the IUF* and the Berne Declaration are publishing the report „Goodbye Paraquat“ (1) which shows that leading producers of palm oil, bananas and tea are increasingly abandoning the highly toxic herbicide, paving the way for a global ban. The report leaves no doubt that the use of Paraquat in modern agriculture is neither essential nor justifiable.**

The results of the survey based on responses from more than 40 food producers lead to three basic conclusions. First, major producers of bananas (Dole, Chiquita, and others) and tea (Unilever, Nestlé, and others) have moved away from reliance on Paraquat. Second, producers of palm oil are about equally divided into Paraquat users and non-users. And, lastly, this split among palm oil *producers* contradicts the preference of palm oil *buyers* for palm oil produced without Paraquat.

„We welcome the news that some leading food producers are opting out of using toxic pesticides like Paraquat. This attitude should become the norm in agricultural production and governments must recognise and support this by banning paraquat.“ says IUF General Secretary Ron Oswald.

Importantly, the results of the survey show that in the palm oil, banana, and tea sectors Paraquat-free production is not only desirable but also economically viable and thus possible. Statements by Syngenta, the leading producer of Paraquat, to the effect that the controversial herbicide is indispensable are clearly untenable. „With its irresponsible and unreasonable support for the product and its aggressive marketing Syngenta is complicit in tens of thousands of Paraquat poisonings every year“ says François Meienberg of the Berne Declaration.

IUF and BD are urging governments to come forward now and ban Paraquat use across the board. In Switzerland, Paraquat has been banned for twenty years and in Europe it lost approval in 2007. In many developing countries the product is still sold in great quantities despite the lack of sufficient protection for users.

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(1) The report „**Goodbye Paraquat:** Palm Oil, Banana and Tea Producers Saying No to Hazardous Pesticide“ could be downloaded at www.evb.ch/en/goodbye.

* The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is an international trade union federation composed of 353 trade unions in 125 countries with an affiliated membership of over 2.7 million members. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

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** The Berne Declaration is a Swiss non-governmental organization more than 20'000 members. Through research, public education and advocacy work, it has promoted more equitable, sustainable and democratic North-South relations since 1968.

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