



# BEYOND PESTICIDES

## 2015 Annual Report Summary and 2016 Reflections on 35 Years

**B**eyond Pesticides is a key part of the change that is occurring across the country, as communities engage in robust discussion and the adoption of land and building management practices and policies that replace toxic pesticides with organic and sustainable methods. As the science continues to support the urgent need for this transition, the practitioners—whether farmers, gardeners, homeowners, or building managers—are proving daily that toxic inputs are not necessary to meet goals for agricultural productivity or expectations for athletic fields, parks, and home lawns. The case for action became even stronger in the last year—a recent study on the cancer causing properties of the weed-killer glyphosate (Roundup), increasing pesticide dependency in genetically engineered (GE) crops and off-site contamination by GE material, the decline of pollinators tied to neonicotinoid and systemic insecticides, and pesticide-contaminated waterways. Our work to bring this information to a community forum is critical to the process of advancing policy that embraces a precautionary approach. With your support, we are increasing the number of successful campaigns for healthy communities that protect the fragility of life.

### 35 Years of Advancing Change

This year, in 2016, Beyond Pesticides celebrates a rich 35-year history of accomplishments in organic policy and land and building management. We are honored to be part of an extensive network of communities, people, organizations, scientists, and practitioners that educates on the hazards of pesticides, while moving decision and policy makers to adopt sustainable organic practices. With its proven viability, we see within our sights the opportunity for a societal transformation to organic practices that protect the environment on which life depends.

### Social Justice

Beyond Pesticides was founded, in part, out of a need to protect farmworkers' lives, and to shed light on the profound failures of the marketplace and regulatory systems in place. With the updated worker protection standards, and the National Pesticide Forum held in partnership with the Farmworker Association of Florida, Beyond Pesticides worked to elevate its program on agricultural justice in 2015. To this end, we also created a new program page (<http://bit.ly/AgJustice>) dedicated to agricultural justice which documents the history of agricultural justice and how it intersects with our work. With an emphasis on farmworker health, our *Eating with a Conscience* database ([www.eatingwithaconscience.org](http://www.eatingwithaconscience.org)), seeks to shift the marketplace to organic, eliminating hazardous pesticides from food production, which in turn reduces hazards on the farm and in nearby communities.



Participants at the 33rd National Pesticide Forum are led on a "Toxic Tour" of Lake Apopka by Jeannie Economos of the Farmworker Association of Florida.



Lake Apopka farmworker Linda Lee, and farmworker and organizer Miguel Zelaya talk to Forum participants on the tour.



Beekeepers participating in legislative hearing on neonicotinoid insecticides, linked to severe decline in pollinator health, in the Maryland legislature, Annapolis, Maryland, 2015. The state was the first to ban retail sales of the pesticides in 2016.

### BEE Protective

Pollinators continue to be an entry point for many people to engage in challenging underlying issues of pesticide dependency. We strive, through our **BEE Protective** campaign ([www.beeprotective.org](http://www.beeprotective.org)), to keep the focus on neonicotinoid insecticides as symptomatic of hazardous, chemical-intensive food production and land management systems enabled by a failed regulatory system with inadequate protections. We track the science on pesticides and pollinators with one of the most thorough and up-to-date databases on the scientific literature, called *What the Science Shows*, which features over 145 studies. We promote pollinator-friendly habitat, and from the local to federal level, we support policy makers with public comments, work as a coalition partner to communicate with a broader public audience, and urge our members to participate in actions. Through this program, we seek to stress the urgency of adopting organic systems to move us off the pesticide treadmill.

## Protecting Organic Standards

Consumers and farmers created the organic market, forming a long-standing alliance to uphold organic integrity. Meanwhile, multinational food companies entering the organic market because of premium prices are not always in alignment with the standards and values that gave birth to organic. Through our campaign **Keeping Organic Strong** (<http://bit.ly/KeepingOrganicStrong>), we have the most extensive critique of National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) proposals of any organization, and continue to stress the need for public involvement in order to preserve the core values and principles of organic in ongoing decision making of the NOSB and USDA's National Organic Program.

## Public Engagement

With our focus on science, policy, and action, we provide community-based organizations and policy makers with technical and strategic support for their efforts. We provide the tools to challenge the status quo and embrace a shift in the paradigm to organic management systems. Our constantly updated website and databases support informed discussion on the need for the adoption of organic and sustainable management systems and the importance of clear and enforceable standards. Beyond Pesticides' **Pesticide-Induced Diseases Database**, (<http://bit.ly/PesticideDiseases>) with over 630 entries of scientific studies, links pesticide use to common diseases, including asthma, autism, birth defects, diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, cancer, and more. We carefully track the commonly used pesticides, the scientific literature and regulatory status through our **Gateway on Pesticide Hazards and Safe Pest Management** (<http://bit.ly/PesticideGateway>). The **Daily News Blog** (<http://bit.ly/dailynewsblog>) keeps people up-to-date with the latest in scientific studies and regulatory activity concerning pesticides. Similarly, our quarterly newsletter, **Pesticides and You**, (<http://bit.ly/PesticidesAndYou>) which is also available on our website, provides resources helpful to organizing efforts.



Conventional peppers received "Best" rating by Whole Foods (WF) and our exposé asks, *When Sustainable Is Less than Organic, Is it Responsibly Grown?* WF pulled the program. See <http://bit.ly/IsItResponsiblyGrown>.



Councilmember George Leventhal joins children and activists in a parade to support the landmark lawn pesticide ban in Montgomery County, Maryland.

## Victory for Local Communities

Our work with community advocates takes a science-based approach that links pesticides to disease outcomes and ecological and wildlife effects, while holding decision makers accountable to standards that protect health and well-being. Communities are increasingly seeking to prevent, rather than simply reduce, toxic chemical use and recognize the power of healthy biological systems at a time when increasingly smaller doses of systemic chemicals wreak havoc with life and the natural balance. This year, we celebrated a major victory with the passage of a local policy banning cosmetic use of pesticides on private and public property. With one million residents in Montgomery County, Maryland, Bill 52-14 represents a landmark achievement. Following the bill's passage, we continue to provide support to ensure successful implementation. We provided training to implement similar policies in Takoma Park, Maryland, Ogunquit, Maine, and in Reno/Carson City, Nevada, Keene and Dover,



From greenhouse at Eldredge Lumber and Hardware, plants grown from organic seeds with organic compost and compatible products.

New Hampshire, which provided the community with instruction on how to manage lawns organically.

## Making the Switch

The marketplace is just beginning to respond to our community campaigns that result in the adoption of organic land management practices and policies. Our new video, **Making the Switch**, and guide, **The Well-Stocked Hardware Store** (<http://bit.ly/WellStockedHardwareStore>), features Eldredge Lumber and Hardware, an ACE hardware store in York, Maine that has transitioned to offering organic-compatible fertilizers and pest management products –taking the toxic pesticides off their shelves. These resources complement Beyond Pesticides' **Model Pesticide Policy and Implementation Plan for Communities** (<http://bit.ly/ImplementationPlan>), and also be used independently for hardware stores looking to encourage the use of products and practices that protect the health of their customers, community, and the wider environment.