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than ever before.

Similarly, it is my belief that we are more knowledgeable about our earth's environment than did previous generations. I do not believe it would be an understatement to say that the planet earth is in serious jeopardy—from the shrinking rain forests, to the polluting of the oceans and land, to the ozone layer problem. Nevertheless, for purposes of this discussion, it is my intent to focus on pesticides as one particularly rampant source of environmental problems. I particularly favor this subject, because I know that we as Americans can do much to prevent the deleterious impact which pesticides are having upon our environment.

This is not some abstract notion that many people have regarding the ozone layer. For example, in one's own backyard or garden, there is much one can do in this respect. Opposition by environmentalists to pesticide use in general and to certain groups of compounds in particular has grown in recent years, based on the contention that pesticides present a threat to the environment and to health. First aroused by the book " Silent Spring" (1952) by Rachel Carson, the anti-pesticide movement has had a substantial influence both in the U. S. Congress and in several state legislatures. As a result, severely restrictive legislation has banned the use of many pesticides and restricted use of several others.

Also, costly and complicated legislation requirements have been imposed on new compounds. Pesticide legislation has significantly hampered research and development in the field. The average cost and lead-time needed to recover, research and market a new pesticide has increased from \$2 million

dollars and four years in the 1950's to nearly \$20 million dollars and ten years in the 1970's. In recent years, more new pesticides have been banned than have had continued effective use, and there has been a reduction in the number of chemistry companies producing pesticides since the restrictions took effect. Environmentalists, scientists, and workers in the pesticide industry have also contended that some pesticide compounds are hazardous to human health. Workers in factories that produce some of these compounds have, in the process of bringing legal suits against some manufacturers, received financial compensation for illnesses allegedly caused by exposure to these chemicals. Agricultural workers have also brought suits, claiming that they have suffered physical damage as a result of pesticide exposure.

Some pesticide chemicals — recently DBCP, which effects the production of sperm- have had their manufacturing severely restricted. Long range potential dangers of pesticides in the body are also beginning to concern experts. In 1989, controversy arose over safe pesticide levels for children. While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) claimed that the U. S. food supplies were safe, the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) produced a study claiming that the safety standards used by the EPA were based on adult diet and physiologies.

Some other problems have been attracting public attention. Certain pesticides are lethal to bees, and it is estimated that heavy pesticide use, especially in areas that depend on bees to pollinate crops, have caused substantial reduction in local hive populations. Finally, it has been suggested that the build up of non-degradable pesticides in the soil and in food chain

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may be more hazardous, in the long run, than these immediate problems. At this point, however, even the claims made against DDT — which was banned in the United States because of its supposed deleterious effects and its bioconcentration in the food chain — are still denied by many experts.

(Baker, pp. 11-13) Frankly, I am more concerned about the solutions than I am with the causes. Clearly exposure to limits of pesticides in food, and in particular, produce, needs to be given further attention. It was not so long ago when President Clinton and Al Gore first took office, and they both voiced their commitment to the environment. Unfortunately, fruits and vegetables, especially throughout the United States and in particular, California, are exposed to heavy concentrations of pesticides, which inevitably ends up in the food chain, and as well things which people themselves ingest.

It seems as if every where you look, there they are: stirring about in your kitchen, hanging in the hallway, and