

Example of ethical behaviors of syngenta term paper

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Ethical behaviors of Syngenta

This report aims at revealing the unethical business practices of Syngenta, the world largest agrochemical corporation. It provides a detailed background of the ethical violation by the company, the ethical concepts that were violated in the agrochemical industry, and gives recommendations on what the company could have done to remedy the situation.

Section 1: Background of the ethics violation

Syngenta is the world's largest producer of pesticides. The Swizz based company is also the third largest producer of seed in the world. It generates more than 75% of its revenue from pesticides. Some of its common agrochemical products that are sold in various countries across the globe include paraquate and atrazine. The sales of these products have helped the company increase its market value since 2003. Some of the products are not approved in developed countries including Switzerland, where the company is based. For instance, Paraquat is mostly sold in developing countries. This product has been the most valuable brand for the company being in the market for over 40 years. The company has been involved in some ethical problems over the past years. The problems deal with the effects of the herbicides and pesticides to the organism exposed to them.

The dangers of these products are well known. Many literature materials have also covered on the dangers of Paraquat. The company continues to resist the wide spread calls to stop productions of paraquat. The company focuses most of its attention on the profit it gains from the sales of the product and not the welfare of the people it targets to use the product. In

2003, the environmental protection agency reported on the potential damage atrazine has on organisms and the environment in general. Water drawn from wells in 21 states had traces of the herbicide. In 2009 a comprehensive report, issued by the NRDC, revealed the presence of the herbicide in watersheds. This report concluded that roughly 75% of stream water and 40% of ground water tested from agricultural areas in the US contained atrazine.

There are numerous effects that these herbicides and pesticides have to both the environment and to living organisms. Atrazine for instance was tested and proved to cause reproductive anomalies in frogs. According to a report by Souder (2005), many of the reproductive hormones and genes that regulate reproduction, metabolism, and development in frogs work in a similar manner in humans. This further implies that exposure to the drug has potential to create an adverse impact on human reproduction system. This report by Souder (2005) is based on a series of test conducted by researchers in 1997 to find whether one of the company's products, atrazine is the cause for a reduction in the population of frogs. The company sought to know the safety of its products and whether it threaten non target organisms such as fish, frogs, reptiles, and amphibians.

Approximately one third of the frogs subjected to testing developed reproductive anomalies. Their reproductive organs were abnormal. Some had malformed or multiple testes. Atrazine has the potential to activate a gene found in male organisms that produce aromatase. The enzyme aromatase is responsible for conversion of testosterone to estradiol. High levels of the enzymes produced in the body cause the anomalies on sexual

organs. However, the herbicide has no effect on the female reproductive system.

The other product, paraquat, also has negative effects to the people exposed to it. According to a report by Berne Declaration (2008), many people are poisoned in developing countries because of exposure to the pesticide.

Thousand others commit suicide or die accidental deaths. In many countries, various pesticides are approved but paraquat. In Germany for instance, paraquat is the only pesticide that is declared highly toxic. In order to be sold, the pesticides require a heavy labeling; warning the users from the potential damage it has to their health. Even a small dose of the pesticide is very harmful to health. The pesticide affects numerous parts of the human body. In the eye, it causes pink eye by damaging the eye surface. In the brain, it leads to Parkinson disease especially when one is exposed over a long period. Paraquat also leads to respiratory failure. It causes pulmonary fibrosis, shortness of breath, rapid heart rate, liver injuries, lung sores, and kidney failure. Other body parts that are affected by exposure to the pesticide include fingernails and toenails, and skin around the arms and the legs.

The damage occurs specifically on the farmers who are not protected when using the pesticide. Most of the victims are mainly from developing countries where the farmers may not have access to protective gears for using the product. The protective clothing, recommended by manufacturers includes gloves, masks, and safety goggles. Some of the developing countries are located in tropical regions. Wearing heavy protective clothing may be impractical for the users in these regions. Despite all the concerns raised

concerning use of paraquat, Syngenta has done very little to make necessary changes. A survey done to show the number of users exposed to the product reveal that in developing countries, a huge number of farm workers have direct exposure to the pesticide when spraying it. a survey conducted in Vietnam, revealed that over 80 percent of the farm workers do not wear gloves when spraying paraquat, more than 50 percent are forced to use leaked equipment when spraying, and 89 percent do not wear shoes or boots.

Section 2: Violated ethical concepts

The corporate social responsibility is seen as a social contract in which business are expected to behave in a certain manner that is beneficial to members of the society. The company is expected to take full responsibilities for the unintended side effects caused by its products. Before engaging in any activities, the company was expected to first weigh the full social cost of selling the products. Corporate moral codes are supposed to constitute part of the organizational values, beliefs, culture, and goals.

The company also had a duty to supporting sustainable agriculture in the world. It is among the member of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). Even though the company made significant contribution to the development of agriculture and creation of food security in many parts of the world, it failed to consider the impact its products have on to the environment. Exposure does not only have to be direct. There are numerous ways in which the people can be exposed to the harmful effects of the herbicides. While in developing

countries, the main worry is direct exposure in developed countries such as the US the main worrying is presence of the herbicides in sources of consumable water.

The company should have focused on the broader view of corporate responsibilities that includes the consumers as well. It is ethical to consider the consumers in corporate responsibilities because without the consumers, the organization cannot sale its products. If the products have an adverse effect to the consumers, the products have to be changed to meet consumable standards. Putting the consumer at risk for the sake of satisfying the value of the company's shareholders is unethical. As earlier mentioned, the corporate activities have to be beneficial to every party affected by the activities.

Section 3; Avoiding the ethical violations

Based on the information that the company gave in response to complaints about one of its products, paraquat, the company should have sold the product with a protective kit. In this way, some of the issues raised causing the exposure in developing countries could have been addressed. With the stern warnings about the toxic nature of paraquat, sales of the product could have been accompanied with the protection gear. The company argued that body exposure to paraquat spray is prevented when all the instructions are followed to the letter. However, in developing countries farm workers are exposed to the herbicide because of not following all the instructions.

With the huge profits the company makes from sales of the products, it could give back to the farming communities in developing countries by offering

training for effective use of the product. In this way, the company would be claiming responsibility for all its corporate activities. In addition, the company needs to perform numerous research studies on the potential impact of its product on all untargeted organisms. These research studies have to be conducted in collaboration with independent researchers to ensure publication of the full report without hiding any information for the sake of corporate responsibilities. Further development and improvement of the products can be based on the findings of the research studies.

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