



## FSC AND CHEMICAL PESTICIDES

**Well-managed forests should minimize the use of chemical pesticides. Any pesticide use should balance social, environmental and economic goals and be supported by national groups and FSC members. This fact sheet summarizes FSC's position on chemical pesticides and describes how forest managers and interested groups can become involved.**

### What is a chemical pesticide?

FSC defines a chemical pesticide as a synthetic substance, used for protecting plants, wood or other plant products from harmful organisms; for killing harmful organisms; or for controlling the effects of harmful organisms. This definition includes fungicides, insecticides, herbicides and rodenticides.

### What is FSC's position on the use of chemical pesticides in certified forests?

*The FSC Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship* define FSC's position on chemical pesticides (see box). The Principles & Criteria are designed to allow flexibility to respond to local circumstances.

In summary, FSC's policy on chemical pesticides is:

- Managers should minimize and try to avoid chemical pesticide use in FSC certified forests.
- There are some chemical pesticides that should not be used in FSC certified forests. FSC has a list of chemicals that are prohibited (see list on back of this sheet). A company applying for certification would normally have to stop using these chemicals before it can receive an FSC certificate.
- However, there are exceptions. In special cases, FSC may approve the limited use of a prohibited chemical. This is called a derogation. Certification bodies may apply to FSC for such a derogation (described on back of this sheet).
- Using a prohibited chemical without a derogation means that the forest cannot become FSC certified.

### FSC's Criteria for Chemical Pesticides

(from the *FSC Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship*)

#### Criterion 6.6

6.6.1 Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides.

6.6.2 World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.

6.6.3 If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.

#### Criterion 6.7

Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.

#### Criterion 10.7 (Plantations Principle)

10.7.1 Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions.

10.7.2 Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

10.7.3 Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.

## What is a pesticide derogation?

A derogation is a case-specific temporary exemption approved by the FSC Board of Directors. It gives permission for a prohibited chemical to be used in a specific area for a limited time and in a specified method.

Derogations may be granted:

- To protect native species from damage by introduced species;
- To protect human health against disease;
- Where the use is obligatory under national laws; or
- Where the use is the only known technically feasible way of controlling a specific organism and promotes environmentally, economically and socially balanced forest management. This must be supported by a majority of FSC members in that country.

National Initiatives can include exemptions for specific chemicals in their national or sub-national standards. This must be supported by environmental, social and economic stakeholders in the country and approved by the FSC Board of Directors.

## Chemical pesticides prohibited by FSC:

World Health Organization Type IA (Extremely Hazardous) and IB (Highly Hazardous)

Chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides

Chemicals that exceed specific thresholds for environmental and human health. These thresholds cover chemicals which are:

- persistent,
- acutely toxic,
- chronically toxic,
- carcinogenic (cancer causing),
- mutagenic,
- endocrine disruptors,
- biomagnifiers (accumulate in the food chain),
- heavy metals, or
- dioxins

A full list of thresholds and FSC prohibited chemicals is given in FSC's Chemical Pesticides Policy (FSC-POL-30-601), available on the FSC website: [www.fscoax.org](http://www.fscoax.org).

## How can pesticide use be minimized or avoided?

There are many ways that forest managers can minimize or avoid chemical pesticide use. Usually the manager will have a management plan with alternative pest control methods and realistic timelines for eliminating pesticides. A well-designed integrated pest and vegetation management plan is recommended as an essential part of reducing pesticide use.

Controlled use of chemical pesticides is sometimes chosen for environmental reasons (e.g. to avoid cultivating the soil on slopes), social reasons (e.g. to reduce human health risk from potential Hantavirus transmis-

sion by rodents in Chile) and often for economic reasons. There are situations where chemical pesticide use is the only known effective option for reducing forest damage caused by introduced plants and animals (e.g. to control opossums in New Zealand).

FSC-accredited certification bodies (the organizations which evaluate forests for certification) must decide if the forest manager is genuinely trying to avoid using chemical pesticides in accordance with either the national or certification body standard.

## What can you do about chemical pesticide use in forests?

Certified forest managers should keep themselves informed about the national and FSC requirements for the pesticides they use. Their operations should promote non-chemical pest management and should make efforts to move away from chemical pesticides in plantations.

FSC members and interested people and organizations can inform themselves and become involved in derogation discussions in their country. Members can contact their FSC National Initiative to learn more about FSC and chemical pesticide use, and to become involved in FSC standards development in their country. Contact details are available on the FSC website.