

# ♥ Activity 1.1.6 Issue Information

## Purpose

When analyzing an environmental issue, you will come upon many sources of information during your research. These sources will have economic, political, and social information influencing people's decisions. How will your research influence your decision on an issue?

Economists analyze the costs on both sides of an issue. Pesticides reduce crop damage, increase a farmer's profitability, and reduce the cost of food. However, if not used correctly, pesticides could also damage the environment, which has monetary costs. The groups most concerned with economics are trade and industry groups. In the case of pesticides, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the American Chemistry Council promote responsible pesticide use.

Politics play a large part in environmental issues through laws and regulations. Departments within the government, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, collect data, write laws, and enforce regulations. People use laws and regulations to determine which pesticides to use.

Social values drive human behavior and decision-making. Some believe pesticides are needed to produce the food required to feed the world, while others believe environmental damage is a significant risk when farmers could produce food without pesticides. Each viewpoint has different social values. The Earth Justice League and National Pesticide Information Center analyze social perspectives of pesticide use.

Environmental issues are difficult to resolve due to conflicting views of groups involved and individual social values. As you research environmental issues, you will find sources of information with economic, political, and social factors to influence your decision. Why should you consider each factor when researching an issue?

## **Materials**

#### Per student:

- Device with internet access
- Pen

- ESI Notebook
- Laboratory Notebook

## Procedure

Research economic and social aspects of pesticide use in agriculture researched during *Activity 1.1.5 Analyze the Issue*. Then identify laws and regulations related to pesticide use. Finally, identify economic, social, and political information for a local issue.

#### Part One – Chemical Use

Use a computer with internet access to identify and record the following information on the respective issues' notebook pages. Begin research with the provided resources.

- Three social risks and three social benefits of using pesticide for food production
  - Earthjustice: Advancing Sustainable Agriculture (http://earthjustice.org/healthycommunities/toxic-chemicals/sustainable-agriculture#)
  - National Pesticide Information Center: Pesticides What's My Risk? (http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/WhatsMyRisk.html)
  - Purdue University: The Benefits of Pesticides: A Story Worth Telling (www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ppp/ppp-70.pdf)

- Three economic risks and three economic benefits of using pesticide for food production
  - USDA Economic Research Service: Fertilizers & Pesticides (www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-practices-management/fertilizers-pesticides/)
  - Environmental Working Group: Pesticide Industry Propaganda: The Real Story (www.ewg.org/research/pesticide-industry-propaganda-real-story#myth8)
  - Purdue University: Pesticide Benefits Assessment: (https://ppp.purdue.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/08/PPP-78.pdf)
- Two laws and the purpose of each law related to pesticide use
  - National Pesticide Information Center: Pesticide Laws and Regulations (http://npic.orst.edu/reg/laws.html)

#### Part Two – Local Issue

- 1. Review the table you developed analyzing your local issue in Activity 1.1.5 Analyze the Issue.
- 2. For each risk and benefit, identify them as economic or social by marking each with one of the following letters.
  - E Economic
  - S Social
- 3. Add additional risks and benefits to the table for *Activity 1.1.5 Analyze the Issue* in your *Laboratory Notebook,* so there is a minimum of three entries of each of the following.
  - Economic risks
  - Economic benefits
  - Social risks
  - Social benefits
- 4. Use the internet to find two laws or regulations involved in your issue and the purpose of each.
- 5. Cite additional sources used during your research in APA format.

## Conclusion

- 1. How are the economic benefits of an environmental issue different from social benefits?
- 2. Why are governmental agencies involved in environmental issues?
- 3. Why are environmental issues challenging to resolve?