

## A Message from Reclaiming Earth Committee – March 20, 2019

Spring is here and we tend to focus a bit more on fresh fruits and vegetables – even growing some of them ourselves to enjoy and share. Because of the season, you may even hear more about chemical-based pesticides and fertilizers.

From a government office we read: “Pesticide use has grown because not only must our exploding population be supplied with food, but crops and food are grown for export to other countries. The United States has become the largest producer of food products in the world, partly owing to our use of modern chemicals (pesticides) to control the insects, weeds, and other organisms that attack food crops. But, as with many things in life, there’s a hidden cost to the benefit we get from pesticides. We’ve learned that pesticides can potentially harm the environment and our own health. Water plays an important role here because it is one of the main ways that pesticides are transported from the areas where they are applied to other locations, where they may cause health problems.

“Pesticide contamination of groundwater is a subject of national importance because groundwater is used for drinking water by about 50% of the nation’s population. This especially concerns people living in the agricultural areas where pesticides are most often used, as about 95% of *that* population relies of groundwater for drinking water.”

(<https://water.usgs.gov/edu/pesticidesgw.html>)

“Consistent with previous investigations, fruits topped the list of the most consistently contaminated fruits and vegetables with 8 of the 12 most contaminated foods. Among the top 6 were 4 fruits, with peaches leading the list, then strawberries, apples and then nectarines. ... Of the 8 top fruits nectarines had the highest percentage of samples test positive for pesticides (97.3%), followed by pears (94.4%) and then peaches (93.7 %).

“Spinach, celery, potatoes and sweet bell peppers are the vegetables most likely to expose consumers to pesticides. Celery had the highest percentage of samples test positive for pesticides (94.5%), followed by spinach (83.4%) and potatoes (79.3%). Celery also had the highest percentage of multiple pesticides on a single vegetable (78% of samples) followed by spinach at 51.8 %. Spinach was also the vegetable with the most pesticides found on a single sample (10 different pesticides on one sample).” (“Report Card: Pesticides in Produce,” *Christian Simplicity: A Gospel Value*)

*Do you find yourself cringing as you read these percentages? I do. Since it is Lent, we could say that we fast from pesticides when we feast on organic foods, but what about after April 21? Can you see a connection with Integral Ecology? What do you see as the ethics, morality, science and spirituality of using a product that brings harm to creation, including ourselves and our health? Reflect and discern.*

