

PITTSBURGH, PA, September 20, 2013 /24-7PressRelease/ -- Recently, Penn State entomologist Ed Rajotte was featured on NPR's "On Point" radio show to discuss the global and growing use of pesticides.

The show focused on the billions of pounds of pesticides used globally as a weapon to control weeds and pests that infect our crops and spread diseases. According to the show, many of these pesticides are carcinogens and have been linked to depression, birth defects, ADHD, Diabetes, even Parkinson's. Scientists are now looking for a better way.

Rajotte, who is also the Pennsylvania IPM Coordinator and co-principal investigator of the USAIDS IPM Innovations Laboratory in South Asia, spoke about the development of pesticides in the late 1880s when it was discovered paint constituents could kill insect pests. He also explained pesticides were further developed as a result of nerve toxins used during World War II.

"During the 1960s we started seeing resistance to pesticides from targeted organisms, and non-targeted organisms, such as animals, were also being affected," Rajotte said. "The publishing of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring in 1962 and a growing environmental movement brought about a change in attitude towards pesticides, and IPM was established as a national program by USDA and EPA."

Integrated pest management, or IPM, aims to manage pests -- such as insects, diseases, weeds and animals -- by combining physical, biological and chemical tactics that are safe, profitable and environmentally compatible.

Rajotte also spoke about the global implications of pesticide use. "In the U.S. pesticides are developed as a result of research by chemical companies and national regulations. Developing countries don't have the same regulatory framework in place, so pesticide use abroad can be more prolific."

Other guests on the show included Erik Stokstad, staff writer for Science. He was part of the news team behind August's special issue on the global use of pesticides. Another guest, Brenda Eskenazi, professor at the school of public health at the University of California Berkeley, spoke about the correlation between pesticide use and development in children.

Penn State Entomologist Talks Global Pesticide Use on NPR

Written by Australian Business

The podcast of the show is available online at NPR's website at <http://onpoint.wbur.org/2013/08/29/pesticides>.

The Pennsylvania IPM program is a collaboration between the Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture aimed at promoting integrated pest management in both agricultural and urban settings. For more information, contact the program at 814-865-2839, or go to <http://www.paipm.org>.