

# Invisible pesticides, Invisible workers, Invisible hazards

*International Conference on Pesticides & Occupational Health Issues in Agriculture*

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**Tours, France**  
**30 June & 1 July 2016**

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Guilhem Anzalone ; François Dedieu ; Nathalie Jas ; Jean-Noël Jouzel ; Jorge Munoz ; Christian Nicourt ; Giovanni Prete ; Gilles Tetart

The conference is free. Advanced registration requested by emailing to **invisiblepesticides.register@gmail.com**  
La conférence est gratuite. Inscription obligatoire par courriel à **invisiblepesticides.register@gmail.com**

*Simultaneous interpreting English / French will be available -- Une traduction simultanée anglais / français sera disponible*

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## **Thursday, June 30**

9.00 am – 9.30 am

### ***Introduction***

**Nathalie Jas** (RiTME, INRA) and **Jean-Noël Jouzel** (CSO, Sciences PO/CNRS)

9.30 am - 12. 30 pm

### ***Scientific and Expert Knowledge Production***

*Risk traceability and prevention work: pesticide risk and the implementation of Hardship Prevention Personal Account in France*

**Jorge Munoz** ( LABERS Université de Bretagne Occidentale)

*Producing scientific knowledge on pesticides' effects on farmers & farmworkers' health in France. The difficult emergence of a recent field.*

**Nathalie Jas** (RiTME, INRA)

*Making detrimental health effects of pesticides visible in Africa. Premises of a collective research project in Tanzania*

**Moritz Hunsmann** (IRIS, CNRS)

Commentator : **Christelle Gramaglia** (G-EAU, IRSTEA)

**Thursday, June 30**

2 pm – 4.30 pm

### ***Economics Logics and Pesticide Uses***

*Risk, blame and justice in pesticide regulation: The political-technical logics of a business conflict in Costa Rica*

**Kees Jansen** (University of Wageningen)

*How markets organizations shape pesticides concrete uses?*

**Guilhem Anzalone** (LARESS, Ecole Supérieure d'Agronomie, Angers) et **François Dedieu** (LISIS, INRA)

Commentator: **Phanette Barral** (LISIS, INRA)

**Friday, July 1**

9.00 am – 12.00 pm

### ***Activism***

*The complicated politics of environmental justice in California's pesticide activism and beyond*

**Jill Harrison** (University of Colorado Boulder)

*Making the invisible visible: social movements, science, and pesticides' health effects*

**Florencia Arancibia** (National University of Tres de Febrero, Argentina)

*Strawberry Fields and Farmworker Life-Cycles*

**Dvera Saxton** (California State University Fresno)

Commentator : **Ivan Bruneau** (Université Lyon-2)

1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

### ***Activism***

*The environmental justice legacy of the United Farm Workers of America*

**Tracy Perkins** (Howard University in Washington, D.C.)

*Pesticides victims mobilizations and the law in California and France*

**Jean-Noël Jouzel** (CSO, CNRS/Sciences Po) & **Giovanni Prete** (IRIS, Université Paris 13)

*Science and Spectacle: Making DBCP damage visible in Costa Rica & Nicaragua*

**Susanna Rankin Bohme** (Corporate Accountability International)

Commentator : To be confirmed

4.30 – 5 pm

### ***Conclusions***

# Conference Presentation

Although focusing on different social, economic and regulatory contexts, studies in humanities and social sciences on pesticides related occupational health hazards share a common concern for the invisibility of pesticide-related illnesses of farmworkers and farmers.

Most of these studies have been produced by United States scholars using California, and a few other US states, as well as some Latin American countries as major case studies. Paying particular attention to the relationships between knowledge production and the production of regulation and its (non-) enforcement, these studies often draw on Environmental Justice and/or Social Movement organizations (SMO) perspective to understand how pesticides poisoning give birth to social mobilization. Farmworkers' health concerns are generally studied through "domination" theories that link job security to the inability of workers to improve working conditions. Farm owners' health concerns are less considered by American scholars. When so, it has mostly been in contexts of the rapid intensification of small farming in less developed countries.

More recently, in Europe – especially in France – a scholarship has been developed that follows various theoretical perspectives (STS, sociology of work, sociology of migration, sociology of activism) to show that regulatory failures and data gaps on pesticide related occupational diseases derive from institutional arrangements as well as to analyze why it so difficult for farmworkers, but also for farmers and extension workers to make claims about pesticides' harmful effects.

These differences in analytical framework appear to result from the differing social contexts in which the research takes place. For instance, because California agriculture relies on a large undocumented migrant workforce, researchers working on this area generally link inadequate action on pesticide-related illnesses to inability of a population without political rights to confront employers or make claims on the government. In contrast, in France, this type of explanation is set aside as a large part of the workforce has long been composed of farm owners and their families.

Yet the use of different methodological and theoretical frameworks seems to magnify these differences, leading to quite different research queries and hypothesis. The study of pesticides related occupational health issues in agriculture would benefit from cross fertilization of research approaches and an exploration of a range of theoretical frameworks, especially if they are to obtain a deeper understanding of how two different cultural, economic and political systems shape – or not – pesticide poisoning (in)visibility and (non)recognition.

The aim of the international conference *Invisible pesticides, invisible workers, invisible hazards* is therefore to gather researchers in humanities and social sciences from various background in order to foster collective discussions on the links between social context, methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. The conference is based on the premise that understanding these links will strengthen the study of occupational health issues related to pesticides exposure in agriculture. Correlatively the conference's aspiration is to foster new collaborations and favor the emergence of more ambitious transnational research perspectives on the study of pesticides related occupational health issues. The International conference will follow three non-exhaustive topics:

a) ***Mobilization and invisible population exposed to pesticides.*** A great deal of studies produced so far have dealt with “visible” invisible people, whether they have been visibly organizing themselves and claiming the recognition of pesticides effects on their health or they have been supported by NGO’s that have drawn attention of social scientists on various sets of issues. Yet very few works have been carried out on “invisible” invisible people. This entails for instance workers and farmworkers who may be affected by pesticides but who do not make any claim or women workers who may undergo specific exposure. It also entails the many professionals who operate on a farm and may be contaminated but who are usually invisible to humanities and social sciences: extension workers, mechanics, workers from spraying companies, workers conditioning fruits and vegetable, seed and grain silo workers, animal husbandry workers (exposed to pesticides used as external antiparasitic agents or to biocides), smaller farm owners... Papers that would address pesticides exposure and health’s effects on these “invisible” invisible workers are welcome.

b) ***Knowledge production and uses.*** Many studies have focused on how the toxicity of some pesticides were assessed in different regulatory systems. Some studies have discussed how lay/street knowledge on residents’ exposure have challenged expert/regulatory knowledge. Yet far fewer is known about the production and use of lay, regulatory, expert, scientific knowledge on occupational exposure to pesticides in agriculture (both in farming and animal husbandry). Papers that would analyze various forms of production and non production of knowledge on exposure the uses of the knowledge produced –or the absence of knowledge– as well as their various uses in risk prevention, policy design and enforcement, activism are welcome.

c) ***Economics Logics and pesticide concrete use.*** Many studies have focused on how the production and the enforcement of regulations may favor occupational exposure to pesticides in agriculture and the downplaying or even the occultation of their health effects and their severity. Yet, fewer attention has been devoted to the influence of socio-economic organizations of agri-food systems on farming practices. We welcome papers that would analyze how commercial and economic constraints shape farming practices and therefore pesticides related occupational health issues. These papers could for instance characterize how through contracts, commercial and private standards etc., socioeconomic local and global agricultural sector organizations (fruits, vegetable, grapes etc.) directly or indirectly shape occupational exposure to pesticides and the possibility to adopt less hazardous practices.