



Triazine Network

Loss of Atrazine Would Wipe Out 21,000 to 48,000 Jobs Dependant on Agriculture

University of Chicago economist says even more losses would come when sorghum, sugar cane and other crops are considered

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 7, 2010) – Banning the agricultural herbicide atrazine would cost between 21,000 and 48,000 jobs from corn production losses alone, according to University of Chicago economist [Don L. Coursey, Ph.D.](#)

Dr. Coursey announced his findings at a briefing sponsored by the [Triazine Network](#) today at the National Press Club in Washington.

Coursey estimates atrazine's annual production value to corn alone to be between \$2.3 billion and \$5 billion. Atrazine's additional value to sorghum, sugar cane and other uses increases these totals.

"The economic data on atrazine are very clear. As a first-order estimate, banning atrazine will erase between 21,000 and 48,000 jobs related to or dependant on corn production, with additional job losses coming from both sugar cane and sorghum production losses," Coursey said. "The range is wide because we have never before banned a product on which so many depend and for which suitable replacements have a wide variety of prices and application regimes."

"If all of that job loss were concentrated in the agricultural sector, its unemployment would grow by as much as 2.6 percent. Replacement costs for corn farmers could reach as high as \$58 per acre," Coursey said.

Atrazine has been a mainstay of corn, sorghum and sugar cane production for 50 years. The second most-used herbicide in the U.S., it controls a broad range of yield-robbing weeds, is safe for the crop and supports a variety of farming systems, including soil-saving [conservation-till](#) agriculture.

The U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) re-registered atrazine in 2006 based on the evidence of nearly 6,000 studies and more than 80,000 public comments. It began an additional, unscheduled review of atrazine in late 2009.

"Atrazine is essential to U.S. agriculture. We appreciate Dr. Coursey's findings and will distribute them to our members, the EPA and to our elected representatives. With unemployment still painfully high across the nation, we can't afford to lose as many as 50,000 jobs and the corn yield that sustains them," said Jere White, Triazine Network chairman and executive director of the Kansas Corn Growers Association.

EPA cited a media report and claims by a longtime anti-atrazine group when it announced the additional, unscheduled review. It was the first time in history EPA did not cite sound science to initiate a review process.

Coursey's statement can be viewed at <http://agsense.org/>.

Coursey is the Ameritech Professor of Public Policy Studies in the Harris School at the University of Chicago, where he served as dean from 1996 to 1998.

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About The Triazine Network

The Triazine Network was established in 1995 in response to U.S. EPA's November 1994 decision to initiate a special review of the triazine herbicides, including atrazine, simazine and cyanazine. Since its inception, Triazine Network members have advocated use of sound science and established scientific methods to evaluate the health and environmental impacts of the triazine herbicides.