

## FACT SHEET

# Rural chemical awareness campaign

There are a variety of pesticides and chemicals used by the agricultural sector to protect plants, animals and agricultural products from harmful pests and diseases. Many of these pesticides and other chemicals can have short and long-term health effects if not used safely.

WorkCover NSW will work with rural communities to raise awareness about using pesticides and other chemicals safely. WorkCover wants farmers to understand the harmful effects exposure to pesticides and chemicals can have – even years later. Some pesticides can be carcinogenic, or cause serious adverse health effects. It's always best to substitute for less harmful chemicals and pesticides wherever possible, and be aware of how to use, store and handle them safely.

The campaign will focus on:

- **Chlordimeform**  
A banned pesticide previously used in the cotton industry that has been linked to serious health issues up to 30 years later and can be treated if detected early. Commonly known as CGS500 or CGS800 in Australia.
- **Organophosphates**  
A group of pesticides with known health effects. Still used by some pest technicians and farmers although they can be substituted with safer alternatives.
- **Benzene in petrol/diesel exhaust emissions**  
From plant and equipment that farmers operate. Exposure can be reduced by various means.

## Next steps

Prevention is better than cure. It is always best to be aware of the chemicals you are using and what symptoms to look for. Follow these simple steps:

- Talk to your employer.
- Read the safety data sheets (SDS) for each chemical you use.
- Substitute with less hazardous chemicals where possible.
- Talk to your doctor about:
  - your past and current occupations
  - any changes you have noticed in your body
  - your lifestyle– eg smoking can escalate symptoms
  - medical tests that may be required.

For more information, call **13 10 50** or visit [workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au)

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#### **Disclaimer**

This publication may contain work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website [legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://legislation.nsw.gov.au)

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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