



PILLAR 1.2

The International Code of Conduct
on Pesticide Management

Its promises and pitfalls for HHPs



The International Code of Conduct
on Pesticide Management



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

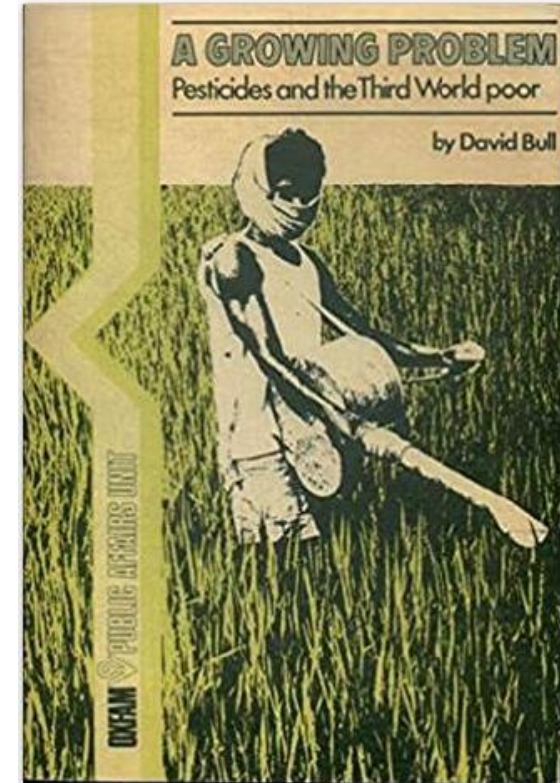
History of the Code

In 1982 David Bull's book was published.

David and other PAN campaigners urged the FAO to produce a model code of practice on international trade in pesticides and pesticide use.

Legislation and good regulatory standards were seen as the first step to counter pesticide problems.

Many government representatives believed that the 'safe use' of pesticides could be achieved through legislation and compliance by those distributing, handling, applying or disposing of pesticides.



Is 'safe use' effective?

The evidence for HHPs is an emphatic 'no' to this question.

National legislation on 'safe use' proved to be difficult to target and implement and failed to address the many barriers to so-called 'safe use' faced by millions of farmers

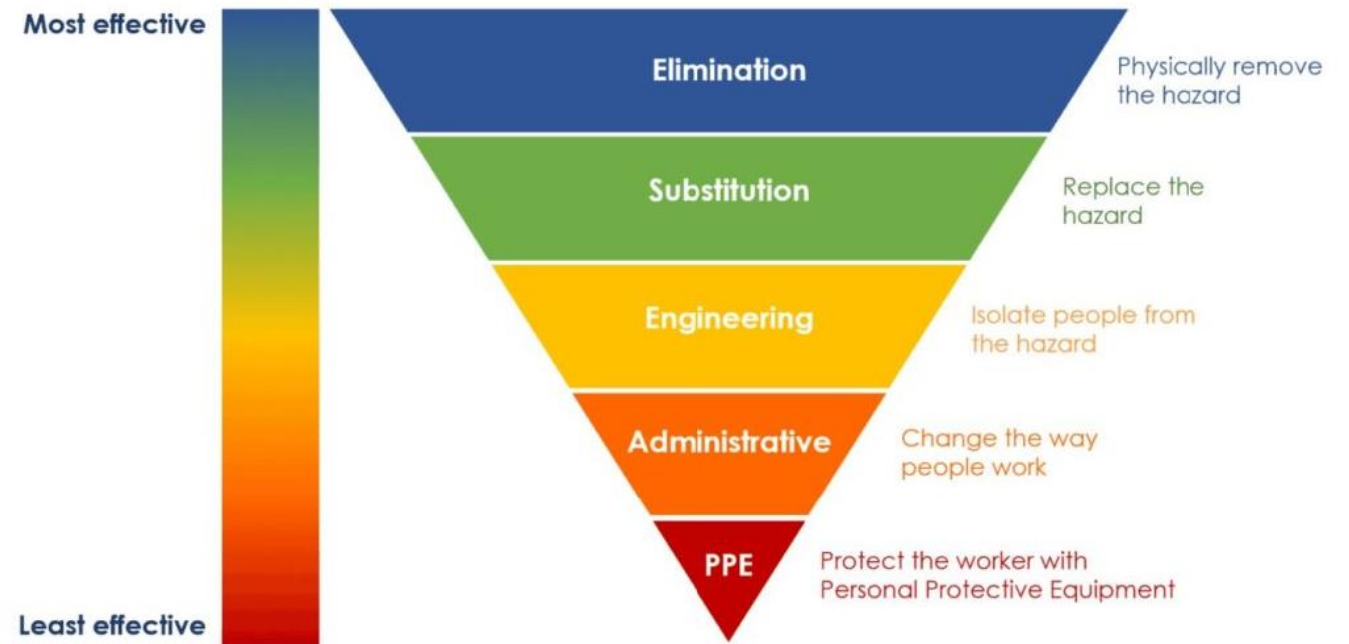
Numerous studies by PAN and others have shown that the use of PPE and other safety measures is very low in many countries, particularly in LMICs.



Is 'safe use' effective?

According to the so-called 'hierarchy of control' for reducing workplace hazards, risk mitigation measures, such as PPE, are the least effective option.

Elimination (i.e. removal from use) is the most effective.



'Safe use' is dropped

The term 'safe use' was dropped from the 2002 revision of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. The revised Code began to address the importance of reducing and eliminating pesticide hazards.



The Code – objectives (Article I)

- to establish voluntary standards of conduct for all public and private ‘entities’ associated with pesticide management, particularly where there is inadequate or no national legislation to regulate pesticides
- within the context of national legislation, to determine whether entities proposed actions and/or the actions of others constitute acceptable practices
- to describe the shared responsibility of sectors to work together so that the benefits of “necessary and acceptable use” of pesticides are achieved without significant adverse effects on human and animal health and/or the environment
- cooperation between governments of pesticide exporting and importing countries
- to give high priority to training and capacity building activities related to each Article of the Code

The Code – standards of conduct (Article 1.7)

- to encourage responsible and generally accepted trade practices
- to assist countries without regulatory controls to promote the judicious and efficient use of pesticides and address potential risks
- to promote practices which reduce risks throughout the lifecycle of pesticides, with the aim of minimizing adverse effects on humans, animals and the environment and preventing accidental poisoning resulting from handling, storage, transport, use or disposal, as well as from the presence of pesticide residues in food and feed
- to ensure that pesticides are used effectively and efficiently and in a manner that contributes to the sustainable improvement of agriculture, public and animal health and the environment

The Code – standards of conduct (Article 1.7)

- to adopt the "life-cycle" approach to management of pesticides to address all major aspects related to the development, registration, production, trade, packaging, labelling, distribution, storage, transport, handling, application, use, disposal, container disposal, and monitoring of pesticides and pesticide residues

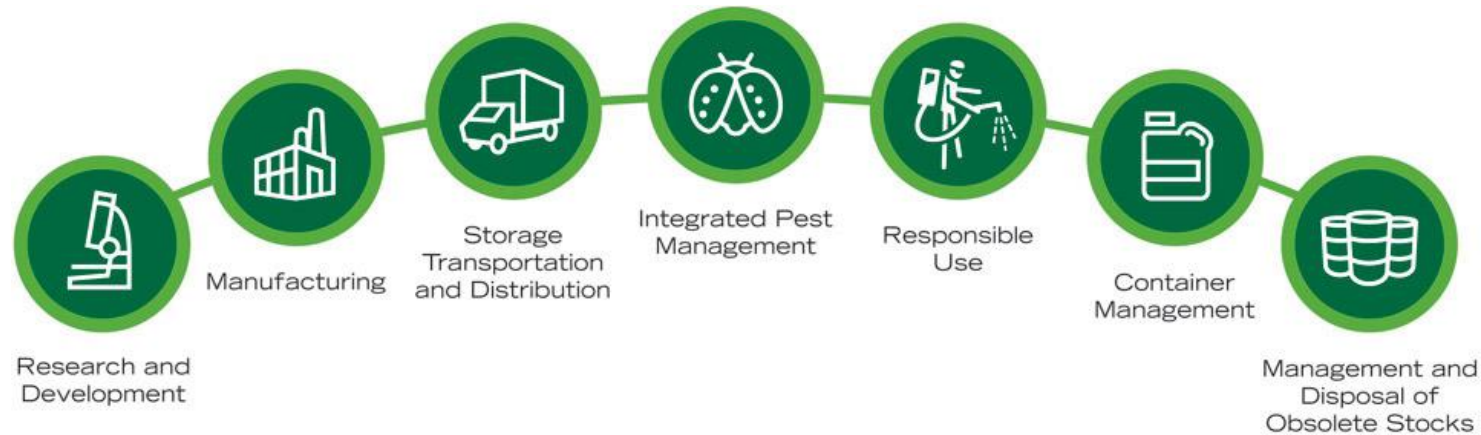


Image: CropLife International

The Code – standards of conduct (Article 1.7)

- to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Vector Management (IVM)
- to promote participation in information exchange and international agreements in particular the Rotterdam Convention



P.3 OF BRIEFING NOTES

Key articles of the Code

3.6 *Pesticides whose handling and application require the use of personal protective equipment that is uncomfortable, expensive or not readily available should be avoided, especially in the case of small-scale users and farm workers in hot climates.*

If governments and industry applied this single sub-article there would be very little acute pesticide poisoning anymore. In fact that there are an **estimated 385 million cases per year** of unintentional acute pesticide poisoning.



Key articles of the Code

Article 4: Testing of Pesticides – this article requires the pesticide industry, amongst other things, to ensure that their pesticides are fully tested and evaluated “with regard to the various anticipated **uses and conditions in regions or countries of use**” (4.1.1);

and that they collaborate with governments to monitor for the fate and health and environmental impacts of pesticide under operational conditions.

Are pesticides fully evaluated for the conditions of use in your country?



‘Conditions of use’ include lack of PPE. Pictured is common practice in India, a farmer wearing an old fertiliser sack with no gloves and a leaking knapsack sprayer

Key articles of the Code

8.2.8 provide ... pack sizes and types that are appropriate for the needs of small-scale farmers, household and other local users, in order to reduce risks and to discourage sellers from repackaging products in unlabelled or inappropriate containers;



Paraquat stored in a coke bottle in Australia.

Photo: ABC News, 2017

P.5 OF BRIEFING NOTES



Paraquat sold in a plastic bag, India.

Photo: PAN India 2014

Key articles of the Code

Article 10 Labelling, packaging, storage and disposal – this is a very important article, including that all pesticide containers should be clearly labelled, in the appropriate language, including warnings against re-use of containers, with packaging or repackaging carried out only on licensed premises, a prohibition on decanting “into food, beverage, animal feed or other inappropriate containers and rigidly enforced punitive measures”.



An area devoted to repacking of pesticides into drinks bottles and plastic bags in a retail premises in Armenia

Key articles of the Code

10.7 *Pesticide industry should, with multilateral cooperation, assist in disposing of any banned or obsolete pesticides and of used containers, in an environmentally sound manner.*

Any stockpiles of obsolete pesticides in your country?

Any problem with pesticide containers being re-used?



Child playing with empty pesticide containers on sale at a market in Benin.

Photo: PAN UK/OBEPAB



FAO clearing obsolete pesticide stocks

Key articles of the Code

11.2.18 *advertisements and promotional activities should not include inappropriate incentives or gifts to encourage the purchase of pesticides.*



Syngenta's 2007 advertisement in Costa Rica for the herbicide Gramoxone (containing paraquat) which promised agricultural bonds as a prize for the purchase of this very hazardous pesticide.

Source: PAN-Germany
http://www.pan-germany.org/download/letter_to_the_fao.pdf

Critique of the code

The Code has some very good provisions, particularly around registration, packaging, labelling, advertising, etc; but also, some major flaws, including the following.

Non-compliance

There is no mechanism or process for addressing non-compliance.

e.g. In 2015, the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR with other NGOs, laid a complaint with JMPM, a very detailed report on the breaches of the Code by Bayer CropScience and Syngenta in the Punjab, India. The report requested that JMPM issue clear recommendations addressed to Bayer and Syngenta to prevent possible further violations of the Code. This did not happen. The JMPM simply recommended that 'ad hoc monitoring reports be used as a trigger to constructively address the broader issues as identified in this report'

[https://www.ecchr.eu/fileadmin/Juristische Dokumente/Ad Hoc Monitoring Report Final.pdf](https://www.ecchr.eu/fileadmin/Juristische_Dokumente/Ad_Hoc_Monitoring_Report_Final.pdf)

Critique of the code

Promotion of pesticide use

Several articles seem designed to promote pesticide use:

1.7.4 ensure that pesticides are used effectively and efficiently and in a manner that contributes to the sustainable improvement of agriculture, public and animal health and the environment

This is contrary to some of the very Guidelines developed to assist implementation of the Code, e.g. Guideline on HHPs which states that the first step is to reduce reliance on pesticides and to “make optimum use of non-chemical pest management practices”. It is also contrary to the SAICM Dubai Declaration FAO, WHO. 2016.

Critique of the code

IPM as the only alternative

1.7.6 are designed to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Vector Management (IVM);

The Code does not support organic agriculture or agroecology, although it does mention “non-chemical pesticides and pest control methods at Article 3.10.

This is despite the fact that FAO has strongly supported agroecology.



Rows of sunflowers planted among cotton as a trap crop for pests and refuge for natural enemies.

Critique of the code

In our view the time has come for a major revision of the Code to:

- de-emphasise the use of pesticides
- include agroecology and organics
- support the progressive phase-out of HHPs
- include a compliance mechanism

It is time for the Code to move on from its voluntary nature and become binding on governments and industry so that its potential can be truly realised.

Please do look at the accompanying
briefing notes for more information and
links to other resources

Thank you

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Susan Haffmans, PAN Germany
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