

Name _____ Period _____

Are Pesticides Bugging the Environment

Read the following article. Then answer the following questions below.

Pesticides are substances used to control pests. Pests included insects, weeds, rodents, bacteria, and fungi. Fruit growers and other farmers are the largest group of pesticide users. They use pesticides to help protect crops from the damaging effects of insects and plant diseases.

In recent years, a number of issues related to pesticides have become public concerns. One of these concerns is in regard to the effect pesticides may have on the environment. Environmentalists fear that soil and waterways will be contaminated by pesticides. They are also concerned that birds, fish and other animals may be harmed when they come into contact with the pesticides. Before being approved, however, pesticides are tested to be sure they do not create any serious environmental threat. The Environmental Protection Agency also sets limits on when, where, and how much given pesticides can be used.

New technology and modern farming methods are reducing the amount of pesticides being used. The latest pesticides are developed to be more effective in smaller quantities. A few ounces of today's pesticide may function as well as several pounds of pesticide used in the past.

Many farmers are also using integrated pest management (IMP) to help limit pesticide use. This farming method encourages natural predators, such as toads, birds, and helpful insects, to help control pests.

Each year, billions of dollars worth of crops are lost to pest damage. Use of pesticides helps to reduce these losses and ensure an adequate food supply. However, concerned people should be comforted by the fact that pesticides are thoroughly tested for environmental safety. In addition, steps are being taken to limit pesticide use when possible without sacrificing crop yield.

1. What are pesticides?
2. Why are pesticides used?
3. Why are the environmentalists concerned about pesticides?
4. How are pesticides being used today?
5. How do you feel about the use of pesticides? Why?