



INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY  
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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **National Public Health Experts Gather in Sioux Falls to Discuss Chemical Exposure**

### **Link Seen Between Chemicals and Region's Rising Rates of Parkinson's and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma**

Sioux Falls, South Dakota - For the first time, national public health leaders gathered today to discuss the link between rising rates of major diseases in the Upper Midwest and exposures to chemicals in the region. Participants assembled at the "Exploring Environmental Links to Disease: A Look at Parkinson's Disease and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma" conference at the Sioux Falls Sheraton Convention Center on December 4-5, 2003.

"While there is growing evidence that many chronic diseases are on the rise in rural areas, and we know the dangerous impact pesticide exposure can have on the human body, there hasn't been a real public discussion about these connections," said IATP's Food and Health co-director Jackie Hunt Christensen. "For the first time, we are gathering together a diverse, cross-section of the community to figure out how to prevent these devastating diseases that have affected so many families in the region."

The conference has brought together a unique group of farmers, legislators, healthcare practitioners, community residents, environmental groups, academics and health-affected people to discuss the region's hidden health crisis. Speakers include:

- Pete Myers, PhD, author and president of Environmental Health News, Inc., on how researchers made the link between chemical exposure and chronic health problems.
- Dr. Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, Science Director, Science and Environmental Health Network and Carolyn Raffensperger, MA, JD, Executive Director, Science and Environmental Health Network on two different approaches that have been used to set policies, risk assessment vs. a precautionary approach.
- Dr. Alan Lockwood, Professor of Neurology and Nuclear Medicine, University of New York at Buffalo, on the potential links between pesticide exposure and the onset of Parkinson's disease, and
- Kenneth Cantor, the National Cancer Institute, on possible relationships between chemical exposures and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- Vincent Garry, PhD, University of MN, on the human health effects of pesticides used in the Red River Valley.
- Minnesota State Representative Karen Clark, a Sioux Falls native, on how legislation might address environmental links to chronic disease.

The conference is being sponsored by a new coalition of organizations called the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE). Individual sponsors for this event include: American Academy of Neurology, St. Paul, MN; Community Alliances of Interdependent Agriculture (CAIA), Bow Valley, NE; Dakota Rural Action, Brookings, SD; the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN; the Minnesota Public Health Association; the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society, Hartington, NE; the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, Fullerton, ND; the Parkinson Association of Minnesota; the Parkinson's Disease Association of South Dakota, Sioux Falls, SD; Women's Cancer Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN.

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