DDT residues in fish from Lake Songkhla, Thailand

Since the early 1950s, DDT has been extensively used in Thailand as a malaria repellent and as an agricultural pesticide. DDT is known to linger in the food chain, and therefore is observable throughout a food chain long after its use has been ended. In Thailand, DDT use was banned in 1994. Researchers from Sweden’s Stockholm University and Royal Institute Technology studied DDT concentrations in 113 fish of four species from Songkhla Lake and the Gulf of Thailand. The mean DDT concentrations at different locations in the analysed fish species was found to be well below the recommended maximum DDT residue levels in aquatic animals used for human consumption (5000 ng/g fresh wt.) in Thailand. The comparatively low residue levels could be due to the high temperature and solar radiation in the region, which may result in a high volatilising and degradation rate of DDT. Also, the high productivity of the lake could result in a dilution effect, when DDT is distributed in a large amount of organic matter, followed by a high biological degradation of the substance.


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