



Pesticide use in Bougouriba: the Cornelian Dilemma of Producers

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Fish deaths, food poisoning, soil degradation, water pollution, in short pesticides continue to present their dangers. Besides that, its use has become "the norm" in the agricultural sector. In the province of Bougouriba in southwestern Burkina Faso, the use of pesticides by producers impacts their yields; and next to it the vegetation cover pays the costs.



Sévérin Méda, producer in Diébougou

"Without pesticides, there is no agricultural production," remain unanimous producers of Diébougou (350 km from Ouagadougou). An observation that demonstrates a "daring" use of pesticides by Burkinabe producers in recent years. This practice has become legion in the locality and everyone finds a pretext. Sévérin Méda is a producer in Diébougou. Thanks to pesticides, he says he can "kill" weeds and exploit several hectares of his field. "Since 2005, I have been using pesticides to facilitate my work in my field... We need that to kill insects and grass," he says. In the field of Richard Ido, another agricultural producer, gives him a completely different excuse: "As labor is expensive, we are forced to use pesticides. Without them, I can't exploit this entire area on my own." Like these two farmers, it is almost all farmers in this province who use pesticides, according to the provincial director of agriculture, hydro-agricultural development and mechanization of Bougouriba, Christian Millogo. "Here almost all producers use pesticides."

Sévérin and Richard say they were informed of pesticide misdeeds; "but we have no choice," they said. On the side of the provincial leadership of Christian Millogo, it is powerless that it witnesses this

phenomenon. "It is true that we cannot ban the use of these products, but we are working for a controlled use of pesticides," he said.

Mother Nature pays the costs of pesticide use

We must act quickly by ensuring that the vegetation cover pays the costs: Soil degradation, destruction of the ecosystem, water pollution to name only these harmful effects of pesticides. Marc Koussoubé is the head of department of the provincial directorate of environmental preservation of Bougouriba. The use of pesticides significantly destroys the soil, according to him. "At the soil level, the use of pesticides neutralizes microorganisms. While you know that soil fertility depends on the work done by microorganisms; and pesticides destroy them thus inducing soil degradation," he lamented.

Mr Koussoubé also points out that the harmful effects of pesticides on the environment are not limited to the place where they were used. They have the ability to travel great distances in contact with the ground, if they become airborne or reach the water by runoff or leaching, he continues. "Concerning surface waters, we will see leaching; because producers use pesticides during wintering and with runoff it causes water pollution," explains Marc Koussoubé.



Marc Koussoubé, DP environmental preservation

The years go by, the practice continues and the effects on the environment multiply. According to the provincial director of animal and fisheries resources of Bougouriba, Yacouba Ouattara, the damage is enormous on the ground. "We have seen high animal mortality due to the uncontrolled use of these pesticides.

Apart from these cases of mortality, it should be noted that the yield related to animal production has decreased at all levels, namely meat, honey, eggs, milk ... ». Sir Ouattara goes further by indicating that animals have developed other pathologies due to the use of these products. "For some time now, we have seen that the frog population has declined significantly. It is the same with fish. What we have also noticed is that animals develop pathologies that disrupt their immune system," notes Yacouba Ouattara.

Pesticide use needs to be reframed to save the environment

Here are the producers and agents in charge of environmental protection, faced with a cornelian dilemma. Continue to use pesticides or think about saving the environment? All stakeholders are unanimous on the harmful effects of chemicals on the environment. But the responsibility lies with the heads of the decentralized structures of the State in charge of the protection of the environment and the rational use of pesticides, to move the lines. "We are working for a controlled use of pesticides," reassures Christian Millogo. As for Yacouba Ouattara, aware of his role in this fight, advocates raising awareness while insisting on the involvement of all actors. "We must associate with awareness, repression for those who will not have a rational use of these products. I recommend a hygiene police to control the uses. " he proposed. In 2013, a sponEDD study showed that the misuse of pesticides costs the Burkinabe state about 15 billion FCFA per year. The highest cost is recorded for human health.

In view of the harms related to the use of pesticides on the environment, the Burkinabe State must assume its responsibilities. supervise their use, in compliance with good agricultural practices and compliance with the environmental code; strengthen the capacities of stakeholders, in particular training on the use of pesticides and alternative methods (preparation and use of biopedicidal pesticides, mechanical methods of weed disposal, etc.) for plant protection services, farmers, resellers; carry out checks on the origin and quality of imported products available on the market; encourage research on bio-pesticides, and promote the use of those already known. At central level, it would be necessary to strengthen the competences of the Directorate of Plant Protection and Packaging (DGPVC) so that it can properly carry out its tasks.

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