

'Natural' pesticides not as common as people believe

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Currently, the [FDA is struggling to define the word natural](#) on food labels. . . . It may be even more difficult to define when discussing pesticides. . . the lines between natural and synthetic can get blurred quickly. Is it natural because it occurs in nature? Or does it have to be physically extracted from nature to be considered natural?

The '*natural or not*' distinction can distract from what is really important when discussing pesticides. If the compound is structurally the same, the naturally occurring and the synthetically produced versions will share the same properties. The *properties* of the compound are far more important, in my opinion, than the *source* of the compound. Is the pesticide safe for applicators and the environment? Does it break down quickly in the environment to non-toxic products? If so, then I'm much less worried about whether it is natural or not, regardless of how we define natural.

But there are questions related to the *source* of the product that can be important. In particular, which has a greater impact, synthesis in the lab? or extraction from natural sources? If we can efficiently extract a renewable resource from nature, and avoid the energy and fossil fuel requirements of synthetic production, then a naturally produced product sounds pretty good to me. But if extracting something from nature means we'll have a greater negative impact on the environment than we would producing it in a factory, then please give me the synthetic version.

Read full, original post: How to Make a Natural Weed Killer