



“I breathe the same air as Sharon Labchuk breathes and I'm not worried,” he said.

“Growers have just come through tremendously hard times, with the border closed last year and a drought this year,” he added. “The problem she is raising is very minor in people's lives. On a scale of one to 10, it's a negative.”

Tod Fraser, head of air quality and hazardous materials for the provincial government, said he was only vaguely aware of the study that one of his staff helped co-ordinate.

“There's always been a concern about what airborne levels of pesticides might be, so someone just decided to conduct a little study to see if anything was there,” he said.

Fraser said he didn't know why the study stopped after 1999, or if the chemicals pose a danger to people.

One of the chemicals detected at every sampling site is a fungicide called chlorothalonil.

The U.S. government classifies the fungicide as a probable carcinogen, saying it can cause severe eye and skin irritation, that it is particularly dangerous if inhaled and that it may cause reproductive problems.

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**PULL QUOTE: `The federal government should review its policy'**  
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The U.S. Forestry Service is only allowed to use chlorothalonil in conditions where it won't drift outside the spray area. The Forestry Service also bans its workers from re-entering a sprayed area for 48 hours.

The P.E.I. study detected chlorothalonil in a box suspended over the ocean, 30 metres from the shore in Abrams Village. Researchers had placed the monitor on the wharf to try to capture pristine samples of air unaffected by local agriculture.

Labchuk said sales records show more pesticide is used per person in P.E.I. than any place else in Canada or the United States. Local farmers spray a whopping 18 pounds (8 kilograms) of pesticide per person each year, she said, compared to an average of just three pounds per person across Canada, or six pounds per person in California.

“The federal government should step in and review its policy on the use of these products,” Labchuk said.

“It may be different when they are being sprayed far from people, in the middle of nowhere, but in P.E.I., they are being sprayed five feet (1.5 metres) from a sandbox where children play, 10 feet (three metres) away from the open kitchen window of a private home.”

Environment Canada officials could not be reached last night for comment.