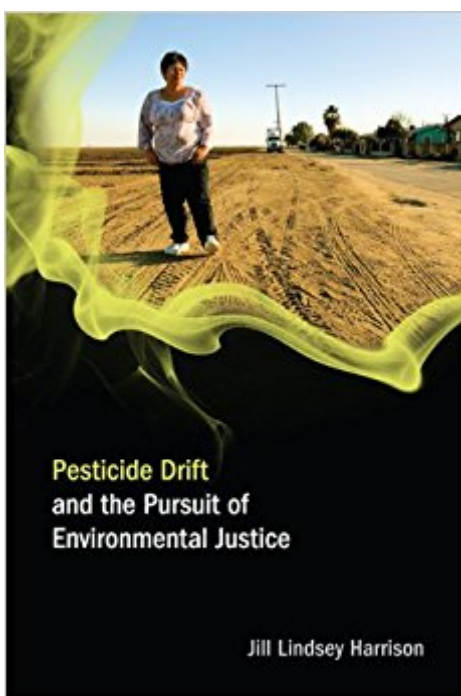


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Pesticide Drift And The Pursuit Of Environmental Justice (Food, Health, And The Environment)



Synopsis

The widespread but virtually invisible problem of pesticide drift -- the airborne movement of agricultural pesticides into residential areas -- has fueled grassroots activism from Maine to Hawaii. Pesticide drift accidents have terrified and sickened many living in the country's most marginalized and vulnerable communities. In this book, Jill Lindsey Harrison considers political conflicts over pesticide drift in California, using them to illuminate the broader problem and its potential solutions. The fact that pesticide pollution and illnesses associated with it disproportionately affect the poor and the powerless raises questions of environmental justice (and political injustice). Despite California's impressive record of environmental protection, massive pesticide regulatory apparatus, and booming organic farming industry, pesticide-related accidents and illnesses continue unabated. To unpack this conundrum, Harrison examines the conceptions of justice that increasingly shape environmental politics and finds that California's agricultural industry, regulators, and pesticide drift activists hold different, and conflicting, notions of what justice looks like. Drawing on her own extensive ethnographic research as well as in-depth interviews with regulators, activists, scientists, and public health practitioners, Harrison examines the ways industry, regulatory agencies, and different kinds of activists address pesticide drift, connecting their efforts to communitarian and libertarian conceptions of justice. The approach taken by pesticide drift activists, she finds, not only critiques theories of justice undergirding mainstream sustainable-agriculture activism, but also offers an entirely new notion of what justice means. To solve seemingly intractable environmental problems such as pesticide drift, Harrison argues, we need a different kind of environmental justice. She proposes the precautionary principle as a framework for effectively and justly addressing environmental inequities in the everyday work of environmental regulatory institutions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jill Harrison explores extensive pesticide health hazards and flawed regulation in one of the nation's biggest industries, where hard-working farm laborers suffer on a daily basis. This is a great contribution to scholarship on environmental justice, environmental health, and social movements. Harrison brilliantly handles the complexity of the many involved players and the underlying social currents. Importantly, Harrison calls on many varieties of food activists to support these farm worker families. (Phil Brown, Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies, Brown University)

Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice presents pesticide drift as a compelling example of an invisible, persistent socio-technical environmental problem with serious, ongoing public health implications for marginalized rural communities. It is a richly textured book, presenting voices from affected communities; discussions of the topic by advocates for industry, the environment, and public health; explanations of the very real technical challenges of properly regulating agrochemicals and practices routine in agricultural production; and the divergent patterns of thought and behavior that construct collective social understandings of justice. (Keith Douglass Warner, Center for Science, Technology & Society, Santa Clara University; author of *Agroecology in Action: Extending Alternative Agriculture through Social Networks*) [This is an important and timely addition to the conversation surrounding U.S. agriculture. It is a welcome antidote to the antipolitics of the food reform movement. (Madeleine Fairbairn, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Rural Sociology)] Harrison does an excellent job of explaining why pesticide regulation and activism has failed to curb pesticide drift...[T]he book provides an important contribution to sociological thinking about environmental justice, helping readers to better expose the assumptions that underlie unjust systems. (Alison Hope Alkon, *American Journal of Sociology*)

Jill Lindsey Harrison is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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