



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Public bodies use less toxic pesticides

Municipal and other local authorities have more than halved the use of chemical pesticides in the last ten years. In municipal parks, gardens and verges only 15 percent of the amount used 25 years ago was used in 2001. The amount of herbicides used to keep roads and pavements free of weeds also fell substantially for the first time. No chemical substances were used in ditches last year, partly because a number of substances have been banned. Local bodies have switched from diuron to the less toxic glyphosate.

Half the amount of toxic substance in public parks

Municipalities used 9.2 tons of active matter to kill weeds in public parks and gardens in 2001, more than 50 percent less than in 1992. They used hardly any insecticides and fungicides at all.

In rural areas, too, the use of chemical pesticides by municipalities is nearly a thing of the past. Today they are mainly used to kill thistles on the bodies of dykes, but here too the amount used has more than halved since 1992.

One quarter less used on roads and pavements

In 2001 the use of chemical pesticides on paved surfaces fell for the first time. One quarter less was used than in 1995. Between 1978 and 1995 the amounts used hardly decreased at all. The amount used on railway track in 2001 was half of that used in 1992, and only 15 percent of the amount used 25 years ago.

Chemicals no longer used in ditches

For the first time since Statistics Netherlands started its survey in 1976, no chemical pesticide use was observed in water courses such as ditches in 2001. New insights had already led to a drastic cutback in the amount of pesticides used in water before 1992. As a consequence of the complete ban no chemical pesticides at all are now used in water. Twenty-five years ago water boards used some 40 tons of pesticides.

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Switch to other active substances

There has been a noticeable shift in the nature of the active substances used in pesticides. In 1992 diuron, which caused problems in the production of drinking water, accounted for one third of all pesticides used. In 2001 this substance had almost completely been replaced by the less toxic glyphosate. Glyphosate already accounted for half of the total 40 tons used in 2001.