

Introduction

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**Dear Professor Pruszyński,
Respectable Forum participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my honour and pleasure to welcome all of you representing the scientific community as participants in the "6th International HCH and Pesticides Forum" in Poznan.

The issues that you address during the Forum are important because of the impact they have on our environment, the quality of our lives and health.

It has been proved again that substances used to increase agricultural productivity are a curse and a blessing as they allow to produce more food and control pathogens, but they also transform the environment in a way that has not been predicted or revealed enough by producers and suppliers of chemicals. The problem of disposal of agrochemicals increases proportionally to the amounts being applied to compete for efficiency in food productivity.

Today's Forum is the second one held in Poznan. I assume that this is a sign of great appreciation for all the efforts taken by the Plant Protection Institute in Poznan with respect to obsolete pesticides disposal.

Protection of our natural environment has recently acquired unprecedented attention, hence I hope that disposal of pesticides and other hazardous or expired substances will be more effective.

Combining various disciplines of science and bringing in international expertise into this field result in more reasonable approaches and application of best methods. Worth mentioning here is the proposal of constructing modern and fully safe landfills for pesticide waste, which are able to store chemicals, transferred from underground tombs and other locations and substances turned in by farmers.

The range of neglect and the resulting scope of work and financial burden that needs to be borne in the nearest future to avoid an ecological catastrophe are enormous, and cannot be placed on one country or a region.

As a province we try to support all urgent needs. The Provincial House started to implement the Development Strategy for the Wielkopolska Province and the Strategy for Development of Agriculture and Land of Wielkopolska and we are still working on other programs that would guide our efforts, including those for our natural environment. We are involved in a number of issues addressed by the Forum.

I would like to mention that I applied to the Committee for Scientific Studies for approval of the project "Development of a system for collection and disposal of pesticide containers and its pilot implementation in Wielkopolska province". The project is the result of a close collaboration with Professor Pruszyński, the Director of Plant Protection Institute and I assure you that we pay a lot of attention to the ecological problems of our region, which are numerous.

I hope that the intensive and more and more coordinated activities aiming at the disposal of ecological bombs, as we more often called the tombs, will prevent us from severe contamination. They are especially dangerous for protected areas, which in our province cover 31% of the land. This would not only prevent contamination of soil and water, but also protect our abundant plants and wildlife.

Implementation of projects applied for to the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Warsaw and the resulting environmental impact assessments performed for 27 tombs within our province will speed up our activities.

The Provincial Board in Poznań initiated and developed the "Program for the disposal of tombs in the Province of Wielkopolska".

We have established an Advisory Committee to supervise the implementation of the disposal program, follow its progress, initiate necessary activities and supervise proper reclamation and landscaping activities. The program is scheduled to be completed by March 2004.

Equally important is the issue of establishing procedures for decontamination of soil polluted with these chemicals that would be safe for workers handling the soil. To this effect, it is necessary to purchase decontamination equipment with PHARE funds and provide training for employees that would form field teams and perform the work. The Plant Protection Institute in Poznan is currently carrying out this project.

Another problem that requires an urgent solution is separation of different types of waste, their recycling and neutralisation. This necessitates a great educational campaign among the economic and social administrators,

citizens and younger generations to make them aware of the environmental issues. Recycling programs will be an important stage. We count on proposals of theoretic solutions as well as financial means that would enable development or transfer of appropriate technologies and projects, i.e. construction of necessary facilities, installations and technologies.

We are in need of programs for coordination of interdisciplinary efforts and environmental monitoring. Various scientific centres are developing these types of programs. We should know about them and have them at our disposal.

For the future, we intend to address drugs, veterinary chemicals and household agents, like we do now with pesticides.

Directing attention toward these issues, combining the efforts and means for their solutions should be the subject of meetings and discussions of a similar group of scientists, which today I have the pleasure to address.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To all our dear guests, the Forum participants, I wish fruitful and satisfying discussions, creative and inspiring meetings and setting directions for further actions in the field of obsolete pesticide disposal with a sustainable environmental protection in mind.

I also wish you success in your scientific studies, happiness in personal lives and pleasant stay in the town of Poznań and beautiful Wielkopolska.