



(NAPSA)—Although pests, such as insects, rats and weeds, can pose a serious health threat, scientists keep finding new, better and safer ways to protect the public.

They have already developed new formulations that minimize risk, such as baits for insects and slow-release products for weeds. Pesticide testing and development takes eight to ten years per product, at a manufacturer's cost of \$35 million to \$50 million or more.

To assure safety, prospective pesticides are tested for harmful effects to adults, children and the environment. In fact, only one in 20,000 products ever makes it to the marketplace.

"Just as antibiotics protect humans from undesirable bacteria and germs, pesticides keep dangerous and damaging pests in check," says Allen James, executive director of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment®, an association of companies that produce and supply pest management products for general consumer use and professional application. "We advocate the safe and responsible use of pesticide products."

Public safety has become an especially important issue over the last several years. In 1999, mosquitoes caused major health problems in New York City and the surrounding suburbs. An insect-borne virus never before seen in the Western Hemisphere caused an encephalitis outbreak that killed seven people and sent 52 others to hospitals. Mosquitoes were also responsible for two cases



Thanks to scientific advances, pesticides are better tested and more effective.

of malaria reported on Long Island.

In 1998, a record 18,000 cases of tick-borne Lyme disease were reported. Fire ants, which can be fatal, sting 60,000 Americans annually. Rats bite more than 45,000 people each year and spread diseases such as Hantavirus, typhus and food poisoning. And cockroach droppings are responsible for asthma, dysentery and digestive tract disorders.

But with the proper use of pesticides, the public is well protected.

"Pesticides are extremely important in protecting public health," says Jerome Goddard, Ph.D., a medical entomologist with the Mississippi Department of Health and professor at the University of Mississippi Medical School. "Consumers do not need to fear being around pesticides when products are being used according to the label."

The only ones that need to worry are the pests. For more information on pests, visit the Web site at www.pestfacts.org.