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Subject: Children's Health Environmental Exposure Risk Study (CHEERS)

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EPA Statement on Children's Health Environmental Exposure Risk Study

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(Washington, D.C. - November 9, 2004) Because protecting the health and well-being of children is of paramount importance, EPA has decided to send the **Children's Health Environmental Exposure Risk Study (CHEERS)** for another external, independent review by an expert panel made up of members of the Science Advisory Board, the Science Advisory Panel, and the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that this review will be completed and that a report will be forwarded to the Administrator in the spring of 2005. Based on this review, the Agency will reassess the study.

EPA scientists need to fully understand how children are exposed to pesticides and through what media (air, water, soil, etc.) EPA is particularly concerned about childhood exposure, because children may be more vulnerable than adults to the effects of environmental contaminants due to their smaller body sizes and rapid physical development. **There is insufficient research to define pathways of exposure** - - the routes by which pesticides may enter a child's body. Possible pathways that could be investigated are ingestion (food and drink), inhalation, residue from crops, soil and ingestion of household dust.

CHEERS was designed to fill these critical data gaps in our understanding of children's exposure to pesticides and chemicals in household environments, ultimately leading to actions that would lower children's exposures to pesticides. The study design was externally reviewed for scientific merit and ethical protections by four Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRBs and the dates they approved the study are: Battelle Memorial Institute (August, 2004), University of North Carolina (September 2004), Duval County (Florida) Health Department (October 2004) and University of Florida (May 2004).

As a federal agency, EPA wants all research to be transparent to the public and to be responsive to public feedback. Citizens are key stakeholders in our work. EPA makes information on current and completed research activities available to the public through various means, including the on-line Science Inventory at: <http://www.epa.gov/si> .

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