

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES
COMMITTEE BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st MARCH 2005

Question

Would the President advise members –

- (a) whether the Committee's officers investigated the recent chemical contamination of Grands Vaux Reservoir, and, if so, confirm the nature of the chemical concerned and the quantity found in the water supply. What action, if any, has been taken by the Committee to prevent the contaminated water getting into the food chain? and,
- (b) has the Committee received information on the possible dangers, if any, posed to health as a result of the contamination?

Answer

- (a) A routine sample of water taken by Jersey Water on the 29th December 2004, at the outlet to Augres Treatment Works showed the presence of cyanazine at a concentration of 1.4 micrograms per litre. The results of the analysis were reported to Jersey Water by the U.K. laboratory that carried out the analysis on the 25th January 2005. Following this result, Jersey Water sampled Grands Vaux Reservoir on the following day, 26th January 2005. The result of the analysis showed the presence of cyanazine at 1.5 micrograms per litre. Cyanazine is a herbicide used on narcissi including daffodils. It is considered to be of low acute toxicity to humans. No reports of acute adverse effects of ingestion of cyanazine have been reported or are known to the National Poisons Information Service (London).

For other operational reasons, Grands Vaux Reservoir had been taken out of service by Jersey Water on 5th January 2005, and has not been used for supply purposes from that date. Further sampling of the Reservoir on the 9th February 2005, showed continued contamination by cyanazine at between 1.1 – 1.3 micrograms per litre. The Reservoir is now being drained and will be refilled with fresh water.

The statutory standard for cyanazine (and most other pesticides) in Jersey under the Water (Jersey) Law 1972, as amended, is 0.1 micrograms per litre. This is in line with EU standards and is more stringent than the World Health Organisation (WHO) standard of 0.6 micrograms per litre. The WHO standard is based on a lifetime exposure to cyanazine by a 60kg adult consuming 2 litres of water per day.

The Water Resources and Environment Departments are investigating the cause of the pollution and will present their findings to the Committee and if necessary the Law Officers' Department for any enforcement action.

- (b) Jersey Water's advisor on water quality, a leading U.K. toxicologist who advises the U.K. Government and the World Health Organisation concluded that whilst the level of cyanazine was above the Jersey regulatory limit of 0.1 micrograms per litre, the concentration found did not pose a risk to human health and the water was safe to drink. Following consultation with the U.K. Health Protection Agency, the Jersey Health Protection Department concluded that adults consuming up to 2 litres of water a day would not have exceeded their Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI). However, it was recognised that the TDI for bottle fed children may have been marginally exceeded assuming the consumption of water containing the highest recorded level of cyanazine for the full duration of the incident. However, given the short period of exposure, believed to have less than 4 weeks, it was concluded that this small excess of the TDI should not result in any appreciable health effects, going by the current state of knowledge of the acute toxicity of cyanazine.