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Children at risk unless growers stop ‘chemical warfare’

Babies born today have a shorter life expectancy than their parents and are more prone to illness because of a lack of nutrition in our soil.

So warns Dr Arden Andersen, a world authority on biological farming, who comes to New Zealand this February.

Dr Andersen, who is renowned as both a GP and soil consultant, draws on research from the US and UK that shows nutrient levels in fruit and vegetables are deteriorating, a trend that he says is consistent throughout the developed world. Such a nutritional imbalance, he argues, is responsible for increased health problems for today’s children.

“Nutrition is the building block of every body, organ, tissue and cell. It is the foundation of the immune and repair system; the absolute core issue regarding disease, birth defects, life expectance and quality of life,” says Dr Andersen.

“Heart disease, stroke, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, obesity and cancer are more prevalent than ever and increasing every year. Children are the age group with the fastest increase in cancer rate. There are literally thousands of scientific journal articles linking all these diseases to nutrition.”

Dr Andersen dismisses the conventional assertion that mass production of food and fibre cannot be accomplished without the extensive use of synthetic chemicals. He says growers can clean up their act without compromising margins.

He advocates biological farming methods that combine the best of chemistry, physics, biology and microbiology with sound farm management practices. It addresses and solves weed, disease and insect problems at their root causes, rather than merely masking the symptoms with chemicals.

Biological agriculture is a “best of both worlds” regime, says Dr Andersen. It is a mix of conventional and organic farming practices that involves careful monitoring of crops and soils to ensure production is of high quality. It results in tasty, nutritionally dense food that consumers clamour for.

“It is a way of thinking and doing that helps farmers to gradually step off the treadmill of agricultural chemicals and onto a path of managing soils, crops and animals in a profitable and sustainable way,” says Dr Andersen.

“One mistake that people make, seemingly more often than anything else today, is relying upon tests, equipment and technology to make decisions for them rather than using their own deductive understanding, observation skills, and intuition.



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“It is unwise and unscientific to stay stuck in a single school of thought while the awareness and understanding of nature grows around us.”

For example, Dr Andersen highlights cases where soil test reports have indicated ideal growing conditions but crops have failed. “Keep in mind, plants don’t read soil tests,” he says. Growers have to put more faith in their own ability to read the soil.

Dr Andersen says growers must also get back to the realisation that they are growing food for people, and how they do that will impact on the health of the environment in which all humankind, animals and plants live; they must take responsibility for the consequences of their actions on the lives of future generations.

Dr Andersen’s New Zealand seminars are designed to assist growers to produce nutrient dense, tasty, safe, clean, bountiful food and drink, while increasing profit per unit of input. He will discuss tackling weeds, diseases and insect pests appropriately and safely, and ways of rehabilitating the environment including building carbon stores in the soil as humus.