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A review of: "Agricultural Chemicals and the Environment Issues in Environmental Science and Technology"

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BOOK REVIEW

Agricultural Chemicals and the Environment Issues in Environmental Science and Technology, 5, 1996 Ed. Hester, R. E. and Harrison, R. M., Royal Society of Chemistry, ISBN 0 85404 220 2, pp xii + 128, £ 17-50.

This is the fifth title in a series, *Issues in Environmental Science and Technology*, published by the Royal Society of Chemistry. The series as a whole, is wide-ranging and aims to provide a concise, authoritative and up-to-date review of topical subjects. *Agricultural Chemicals and the Environment* attempts to determine the extent to which practices associated with modern intensive agriculture impact upon the environment. The six reviews are interesting and clearly presented but certain ones are rather narrow in their geographical outlook and therefore overall relevance. They deal in turn with aspects relating to fertiliser use and nitrate leaching, eutropication and toxic algal blooms, impact of herbicides and pesticides on water quality, agricultural N and emissions to the atmosphere, drugs and growth accelerators used in livestock production and lastly, risk assessment of cyanobacterial toxins. While the line between the title and the topics of certain papers is clear in some cases, it is a little more tenuous for others, with agriculture not necessarily always the main 'culprit'. The papers feel extremely separate and unfortunately there is only a limited attempt to cross-refer between the articles, in spite of there being clear links between certain ones. This is not helped by the order in which the papers appear which seems to be random. There appears to have been little guidance given to the authors which in my opinion limits the usefulness of the book as a whole. Having said this the papers individually are clearly written although certain of the figures are poorly reproduced making them difficult to decipher.

While the anticipated target audience is quite wide, the overall usefulness is limited by the poor organisation of the book.

A. C. Edwards
10 September 1996