

Kaitlyn Gaglio

Dr. Newmark

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Rachel Carson's Legacy: America's Reliance on the EPA

Since 1962, when Rachel Carson published her ground-breaking study *Silent Spring*, Americans have become much more concerned with the impact of chemicals on farmland, crops, and animals. Carson was particularly concerned with the use of pesticides, such as DDT. In her observations, pesticides caused significant harm to the environment; her focus was largely on insects and their ability to adapt to the onslaught of pesticides that seek to destroy them. What she found was that pesticides create new problems, such as the emergence of superbugs. All-in-all, what we have learned from Carson is that food corporations rely on pesticides to control problems that face American crops and that there are problems that need further scrutiny. She argues that such businesses need more oversight when it comes to pesticides usage. Today, American companies must conform to the regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We know, however, that many companies have become creative in circumventing EPA regulations; a case in point is the famous lawsuit between Monsanto and _____. As a result of Carson's book and the ensuing years of increased environmental scrutiny, agribusiness companies are now reluctant stewards of the environment. We see their "stewardship" in their self-representations on their corporate websites, their quick response to environmental accidents and poisonings, and their eagerness to present themselves as "green" companies.

Body paragraph 1:

Give some background on Carson. Inform readers of her reasons for action. Indicate why the EPA emerged from the upsurge of environmental attention that followed from her book. Quote from Carson. According to Carson, “. . . .” (80). Carson opens her text with a fable in which she foretells of a time when poisonous chemicals create a soundless world: no insect chirps, no animals noises, . . . This fable sets a dramatic tone and enables her detail about agribusiness usage of pesticides to resonate even more strongly in her reader.

Body paragraph 2:

Today, we are four decades removed from Carson’s time. Since then, WHAT’S HAPPENED. Offer a picture of what kinds of regulations guide corporate agriculture today. Are we in a moment when insects chirp and birds sing? Yet, Carson was not alone in foreseeing such potential problems. As Richard A. Fenske writes in his paper “For Good Measure: Origins and Prospects of Exposure Science,” the field of study of plant and animal exposure to pesticides grew significantly in the 1960s; Carson’s work existed as part of this climate. He writes, “the field was clearly foreshadowed in a prescient analysis [of] . . . 1965” (494).

Body paragraph 3:

Maybe another source. Maybe a non-scholarly source relevant to today.

Body paragraph 4:

Offer insights into today – perhaps reflect on certain well known incidents.

Conclusion:

Return to Carson. Speak to EPA’s influence on present-day agribusiness companies and how this relationship descends from Carson and others.

Next page: Works Cited