Slide 1 – “Chemical Pollution from Pesticides in Farming”

“Good morning everyone!
Today, I want to talk about something that affects almost all of our food — *pesticides*.
They help farmers protect their crops, but they also cause **chemical pollution** that can harm the environment and even people.”

“Let’s start with a quick question for you.”

Slide 2 – “What do *YOU* think are pesticides?”

“So, what do *you* think pesticides are? Are they protection for plants, pollution for the environment, or hazardous chemicals?”

“Most of you probably chose protection for plants — and that’s true!
But the interesting part is that pesticides can be *both* protection and pollution, depending on how they’re used.”

“Let’s take a closer look at what pesticides really are.”

Slide 3 – “What Pesticides REALLY Are”

“Pesticides are **chemicals** used to kill or control pests, weeds, or fungi.
They help farmers **increase crop yields** — meaning they can harvest more food from the same area of land.”

“There are three main types of pesticides:”

1. **Insecticides** – kill harmful insects like caterpillars or locusts.
2. **Herbicides** – kill weeds so they don’t steal sunlight and water from the crops.
3. **Fungicides** – stop molds and plant diseases from damaging crops like wheat or grapes.”

“One of the most widely used herbicides in the world is **glyphosate**, also known as *Roundup*, produced by the company **Monsanto**.
Glyphosate is controversial because the **International Agency for Research on Cancer**

(IARC) classified it as *"probably carcinogenic to humans"* — meaning it *might cause cancer*.
Still, it's the **#1 most used pesticide in the United States** and also very common in other countries."

"Another example is **2,4-D**, which stands for *2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid*.
It's one of the oldest herbicides still in use today.
It was even part of *Agent Orange*, the chemical mixture used during the **Vietnam War** that caused severe environmental and health damage.
Even though modern 2,4-D is less toxic, it shows how closely pesticides are linked to both agriculture and human health issues."

"So while pesticides do help increase food production, they can also have serious consequences — not only for nature, but also for people."

"Let's see how big the problem really is."

Slide 4 – "How many people are poisoned by pesticides every year worldwide?"

"Now let's play a quick guessing game."
"How many people do you think are poisoned by pesticides every year around the world — in millions?"

"The real number is about **385 million people every year** — that's almost the population of the entire European Union!
Most of these poisonings happen in developing countries, where farming standards and safety rules are much weaker."

"Austria, on the other hand, is very different. Let's look at an example closer to home."

Slide 5 – "Example: Austria"

"Austria is actually a *leader* in sustainable agriculture.
Around **25% of all Austrian farmland** is organic — that's one of the highest rates in the entire European Union."

“Austria also has **strict EU and national laws** that limit harmful pesticides, and many farms are part of the **‘Bio Austria’** program.”

“In fact, Austria is far above the **EU median**, which is only around 9% organic farmland. This means Austria produces cleaner food, protects water quality, and supports biodiversity better than most other European countries.”

“But while Austria is leading, many countries are still using huge amounts of pesticides.”

Slide 6 – “Leading Countries in Agricultural Consumption of Pesticides Worldwide”

“Here we can see the countries that use the most pesticides worldwide — especially **China, the United States, and Brazil**.”

“These countries have massive industrial farms.
They produce huge amounts of food, but also cause massive **chemical pollution** in soil and rivers.”

“Austria shows that it’s possible to grow food in a safer and more sustainable way — but globally, there’s still a long way to go.”

Closing Line

“So to sum up:
Pesticides help protect crops and increase yields, but they also cause pollution and health risks when overused.
Glyphosate and 2,4-D show that even modern chemicals can have hidden dangers.
Austria, however, proves that with strict laws and organic farming, it’s possible to balance productivity and sustainability.”

“Thank you for listening!”