

German police suspect farmer poisoned lake close to drinkingwater intake.



Bodensee Waterproduction



KONSTANZ, GERMANY - Police in southern Germany said a farmer was suspected of deliberately dumping pesticide into a lake, next to a water supply inlet that serves 4 million people. Three weeks after a threat to poison water supplies, divers last Wednesday recovered two empty canisters that had contained 10 litres of the herbicide atrazine on the bottom of Lake Constance. The attack was not publicized at the time. Prosecutors said police were searching the premises of a farmer near Ravensburg on the lake shore. They said he was suspected of mounting the attack to obtain revenge against the justice system.

The water-supply authority in southern Baden Wuerttemberg state said chemists detected an increase in the concentration of atrazine in piped water after the attack, but it had not exceeded the safety limit of 0.1 millionth of a gram per litre.

Atrazine is common in run-off from farms. Divers were continuing to search for any more containers near the inlet pipes, in water 60 metres deep off the German town of Sipplingen. Every year about 135 million cubic metres of water is removed through the inlet and piped as far as the city of Stuttgart. Lake Constance is wedged between Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

