

PEP-TALK
OSU Extension Pesticide Education Program
Vol 3 Issue 1 February 1998

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OHIO PAT PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

The PAT office has additional Pesticide Applicator Training recertification proceedings manuals available for free. First come, first serve. If interested please call June Allen at 614-292-6441.

ANOTHER INFLAMMATORY REPORT FROM THE "EWG"

On January 29, 1998, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) held a press conference announcing the release of a new study analyzing the exposure of children age five and under to residues of pesticides on a variety of foods. The study claims that nearly 1 million children are exposed daily to levels of organophosphate pesticides that exceed the EPA safety standard. Baby food, peaches, apples, nectarines, popcorn, pears, applesauce, grapes, cherries, and apple juice are among the foods specifically mentioned.

The EWG report "Overexposed: Organophosphate Insecticides in Children's Food" takes EPA to task for not moving aggressively enough under the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA). The press release and the report are clearly intended to stir public opinion about food safety and pesticides. The report says the solution is not for infants, children and pregnant women to eat fewer fruits and vegetables, but to rid these otherwise healthful foods of the most dangerous pesticides. The report recommends that EPA take immediate action to ban many of the uses of organophosphate insecticides.

The study found that of the 13 OP pesticides found in or on food by the USDA and FDA, most of the risk to children comes from five chemicals: methyl

parathion, dimethoate, chlorpyrifos, pirimiphos methyl and azinphos methyl. The report urges that these five pesticides be banned immediately for all agricultural use, and also recommends: 1. A ban on all home and other structural use of OP pesticides. 2. A ban on all OP pesticides on commodities that end up in baby food. 3. Safety standards for all OP pesticides must be set at levels that are safe for infants and children. 4. Additional developmental neurotoxicity studies on all OP pesticides in the food supply must be conducted before EPA adopts new OP regulations next year.

The methodology used by EWG is not clear. Neither EPA nor USDA have had the opportunity to evaluate the study for accuracy and appropriate use of data. USDA will be working with EPA to do an evaluation. The study relies on two USDA data bases -- residue levels and frequency found in the Pesticide Data Program and the Food Consumption Survey data. With these data, EWG estimated daily exposure to organophosphate pesticide residues. Exposure levels were compared to EPA reference dosages for the toxic end-point of concern--acetylcholinesterase inhibition. Low levels of exposure produce acute, flu-like symptoms.

The USDA pesticide data program (PDP) has been in operation since May, 1991 and has, for a number of years, focused on foods most likely consumed by children. Since 1991, 26 foods have been analyzed for over 70 pesticides and their metabolites including many characterized as having "neurotoxic" effects.

In 1995, the most recent year for which data are available, PDP collected and analyzed a total of 6,924 food samples. Of these samples, only 9 (0.13 percent) had residue levels exceeding the established EPA tolerance (a tolerance is the maximum allowable level of a pesticide residue). 254 samples (3.7 percent) were found to contain residues of pesticides for which a tolerance for that pesticide on that particular commodity had not been established by EPA. In general, when pesticide residues were detected, the levels present were very low and well within the established EPA tolerances. PDP routinely notifies EPA and FDA of any apparent tolerance violation.

USDA routinely conducts food consumption surveys for a variety of health and nutritional programs. At EPA's request, USDA is currently conducting a supplemental survey of infants and children. The survey will cover about 5,000 individuals and the data will allow EPA to more accurately assess the dietary risk to children.

(Environmental Working Group, a project of the Tides Center, is a nonprofit research organization with offices in Washington, DC and San Francisco.) (Sources: John Ward, USEPA, Fax, January 29, 1998. EWG press release, January 29, 1998. USDA info memorandum, January 30, 1998) (Full EWG report can be downloaded from the website, <http://www.ewg.org/>)

TERMINATION OF METHAMIDOPHOS USE

EPA issued a notice to terminate, at the registrants' request, the use of methamidophos on all agricultural crops except cotton and potatoes by deleting all other uses from all methamidophos FIFRA section 3 registrations, and to cancel all section 24c food-use registrations not labeled for use on tomatoes only. Terminations and cancellations were effective December 31, 1997. (Federal Register, December 23, 1997)

CHEMICAL & LABEL UPDATE

The following information provides registration status of particular pesticides and should not be considered as pesticide recommendations by OSU Extension.

FIELD CROPS

Sodium salt of diflufenzopyr--BASF Corporation-- EPA issued an experimental use permit allowing use of 609 pounds of this herbicide on 1,740 acres of corn to evaluate the control of broadleaf weeds and grasses. Ohio is one of nineteen states included in the program. The permit is effective from 3/1/98 to 10/1/98. (Federal Register, December 31, 1997)

Ethalfuralin--EPA established a time-limited tolerance for ethalfuralin in or on canola seed. (Federal Register, December 17, 1997)

Cloransulam-methyl -- DowElanco--EPA approved applications to conditionally register FirstRate Herbicide containing the active ingredient Cloransulam-methyl for broadleaf weed control in soybean uses. Fact Sheet are available from the EPA home page under "Laws and Regulations" (<http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>). (Federal Register, January 9, 1998)

FRUITS and VEGETABLE

Notice of Receipt of Requests for Amendments to Delete Uses in Certain Pesticide Registrations

Unless a request is withdrawn, the Agency will approve these use deletions and the deletions will become effective on June 22, 1998.

Triforine Technical delete: Almonds, apples, apricots, cherries, nectarines, plums, prunes, asparagus, high bush blueberries, cranberries

TOPSIN M Technical, 4.5F, 85 WDG, WSB & 70W delete: Celery

Freshgard 25 delete: Apples, cantaloupes, carrots, cherries, cucumbers, nectarines, peaches, peppers, pineapples, plums, sweet potatoes, tomatoes (Federal Register, December 24, 1997)

Hexythiazox (trans-5-(4-chlorophenyl)-N-cyclohexyl-4-methyl-2-oxothiazolidine-3-carboxamide)-- On its own initiative, EPA established a time-limited tolerance for this insecticide in or on strawberries. (Federal Register, December 31, 1997)

Bifenthrin -- EPA has extended a time-limited tolerance for this insecticide in or on broccoli and cauliflower for an additional 1-year period, to January 31, 1999. (Federal Register, January 9, 1998)

Bifenthrin-- EPA established a time-limited tolerance for bifenthrin in or on cabbage. (Federal Register: January 14, 1998)

RIGHT-TO-KNOW DRAFT BROCHURE

1996 Food Quality Protection Act / Right-To-Know Draft Brochure is available for public comment concerning the information it contains on pesticide residues in food. The draft brochure is available in two formats; the text is identical, but the illustrations differ. EPA is required by the Food Quality Protection Act to make this brochure available to the public through large grocery stores by August 3, 1998. The brochure is also available via the internet at the EPA Home Page at the Federal Register--Environmental Documents entry for this document under "Laws and Regulations" (<http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>). (Federal Register, January 14, 1998)

NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is seeking comments on a proposal to establish a National Organic Program (NOP or program). The program is proposed under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA or Act), which requires the establishment of national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as organically produced to facilitate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced and to assure consumers that such products meet consistent standards.

This program would:

- establish national standards for organic production and handling of agricultural products
- would include a National List of synthetic substances approved for use in the production and handling of organically produced products.
- would establish an accreditation program for State officials and private persons who want to be accredited to certify farm, wild crop harvesting, and handling operations that comply with the program's requirements, and a certification program for farm, wild crop harvesting, and handling operations that want to be certified as meeting the program's requirements.
- would include labeling requirements for organic products and products containing organic ingredients, and enforcement provisions.

Further, the proposed rule provides for the approval of State organic programs and the importation into the United States of organic agricultural products from foreign programs determined to have equivalent requirements. (Federal Register, December 16, 1997)

EPA BLASTS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSAL ON ORGANIC STANDARDS

EPA water officials are taking issue with a new proposal from the Department of Agriculture that bars crops that are grown with biosolids from being labelled as organic, fearing that it could significantly deter the use of biosolids as fertilizer.

Agency sources argue that although biosolids come from sewage, they are closely regulated and safe, and warn that the use of biosolids as a fertilizer is often safer than the use of untreated animal manure.

The Department of Agriculture issued a proposed rule Dec. 15 which sets uniform standards for the certification of organic foods. Under this proposal, only raw foods which are grown without the use of any hormones, pesticides or synthetic fertilizers can be labelled as organic. Biosolids, which are treated wastewater residuals, are excluded from USDA's proposed National Organics Standard Rule. EPA staff had pressed USDA to include an exemption for biosolids.

Earlier this year, EPA stepped up its efforts to promote the recycling and beneficial use of biosolids, charging that once recycled, biosolids can be used as a valuable fertilizer. In pilot studies, an agency source says that some composted biosolids have even been used to decrease levels of hazardous lead contamination in soil and thus reduce health risks to children. An agency

staffer says that a strong scientific basis has evolved to support the positive use of biosolids.

EPA sources fear that USDA's rule could significantly deter the use of biosolids as a fertilizer, and instead promote the use of untreated animal manure which may contain high levels of e-coli or salmonella. This proposal would lead the public to believe that food labeled as organic is safer, which may not necessarily be the case, one EPA source says.

EPA sources say they plan to voice concerns with the proposal and press USDA to reconsider its position when it is drafting its final rule. Agency sources point out that USDA and the Food & Drug Administration endorsed the use of biosolids as a fertilizer for fruits and vegetables in the 1980s. (John Ward, USEPA, e-mail, January 6, 1998)

NEW 4 HOUR PRODUCT ADDED TO WPS LIST(#127)

There is a new addition to the 4 hr REI list. This new conditional registration from Zeneca, Touchdown BTU, is a nonselective foliar systemic herbicide used for weed control.

For Touchdown BTU, the Agency approved the 4 hr REI with Handler PPE: long sleeved shirt, long pants, shoes, socks, waterproof gloves. Worker PPE: Coveralls, shoes, socks, waterproof gloves.

The complete list of 4hr REI products can be obtained from the OSU PAT office. There are 128 formulated products now listed. (Donald Baumgartner, USEPA, e-mail, December 23, 1998)

UPDATED WPS VIDEOTAPE

The Michigan State University WPS worker training video was slightly updated and revised this past summer. It does contain some new verbiage pertinent to the new changes (4 hr REI, 7 hr decontamination station period, smaller warning sign, irrigation exception). It is available for purchase by calling Michigan State at 616/467-5511. (Donald Baumgartner, USEPA, December 23, 1997)

INTERNET SITES

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network recently posted contact information for each state's regulatory agency on their website: <http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn/state1.htm>

Worker Protection documents in the **National Ag Safety Database**. It addresses all sectors of farm safety, such as pesticides, equipment safety, hazards associated with silos, etc. Check out the database at the following site: www.cdc.gov/niosh/nasd/nasdhome.html (Judy Smith, USEPA, December 18, 1997)

A web site and search engine specifically for **chemical related information** (including pesticides): <http://chemfinder.camsoft.com/> (Donald Baumgartner, USEPA, e-mail, January 30, 1998)

EPA web accesses a great deal of **pesticide information**: www.epa.gov/pesticides (Donald Baumgartner, USEPA, e-mail, January 30, 1998)

PSST...

The following are statements made at the recent IR-4 Annual Meeting concerning the ultimate outcome of implementing the Food Quality Protection Act. These statements were made by members of EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, Strategic Pest Management Inc., and California's Department of Pesticide regulation: "The revocation of tolerances (cancellation of food use registrations, because of FQPA) will start in 18 to 24 months." "There is a realistic estimate that 70 to 80 percent of organophosphate and carbamate registrations could be gone within five years." "The impact of FQPA will be an order of magnitude worse than reregistration." "Organophosphate pesticides will probably live and die together as a group." (Chemically Speaking, January 1998)

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