

PEP-Talk, June, 2001

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Five-Year WPS Training

Time flies when you're doing pesticide applicator training! It's been five years since Worker Protection Standards (WPS) were established for agriculture pesticides. Handlers and workers must have WPS training when they first begin their job, then at least once every five years.

Farms, nurseries or greenhouses need to be sure their handlers and workers are up-to-date with the WPS training. The training includes pesticide handling and safety, emergency procedures and preventing pesticide exposure. Handlers are those who mix, load, apply pesticides or work with pesticide contaminated equipment. Handlers do not need to be trained if they are already licensed applicators. Workers do not handle the pesticides, but work in fields or areas where the pesticides are used. Special additional training needs to be given to early entry employees.

Ohio Department of Agriculture inspectors can request WPS records for workers at any time. The WPS training can be done by a licensed pesticide applicator, or someone trained for WPS instruction. The Pesticide Education Program has some videos available for loan to help with WPS training. Some of the videos are bilingual, so both English

and Spanish speaking audiences will understand the material. We also have WPS manuals to help with training. Manuals, posters, videos and other materials are available for purchase at Gempler's (www.gemplers.com) or EPA (www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/catalog/subpage7.htm)

Atrazine Update

The U.S. EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) and its Health Effects Division (HED) issued a preliminary risk assessment for atrazine. The public comment period ended for the risk assessment ended April 16.

The assessment downgraded the cancer risk of atrazine to "not likely" and generally describes its exposure risks as acceptable except for a small number of scenarios involving workers and toddlers (through the Food Quality Protection Act 10x safety factor). The decision to use the safety factor stemmed from evidence showing that atrazine is, or may be, an endocrine disruptor -- the first time the HED has applied the factor for this reason.

This has been refuted by Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc. in a 800-page response to the preliminary risk assessment. Syngenta and others have questioned the research methods, including the choice of rat species used in the research. Other organizations such as the American Crop Protection Association, Kentucky Corn Growers Association and Pennsylvania Pesticide Advisory Board have supported the continued registration of atrazine. Several environmental groups have issued demands for more studies or an outright ban of atrazine in their public comments on the preliminary risk assessment of atrazine.

(Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News, April 30, 2001, page 22)

School Pesticide Bill in Washington

The Washington state legislature passed a bill, called the "Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act," aimed at providing better information to parents about pesticide use in their children's schools. If signed by the governor, schools would be required to post indoor notification signs when pesticides are applied, improve notification signs outside, establish a registry to notify parents of applications and make available an annual

summary on pesticide use.

(Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News, April 30, 2001, page 22)

Pesticide & Health Update

Organophosphate (OP) pesticide residues were found in virtually all urine specimens supplied by 110 children from two unidentified towns in the Seattle metropolitan area.

The 1998 study was performed by researchers from the University of Washington's Department of Environmental Health. The study found higher diethyl DAP concentration

(the biomarker used in the study) in children whose families reported pesticide use in their gardens, than those whose families had gardens but reported using no pesticides.

Herbicides and Rodenticides - A University of Maryland School of Medicine study indicates women exposed to herbicides and rodenticides while pregnant are more likely

to have babies with a rare heart defect called TGA (transposition of the great arteries.)

Researchers interviewed parents of children born with congenital heart defects, including

TGA, about a wide range of environmental exposures before and during pregnancy. Of

the various heart conditions, only TGA was associated with pesticides; according to the study.

(Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News, April 16, 2001)

New Agent Corner -- WPS Resources and Background

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a federal regulation designed to protect agriculture workers and handlers. Workers do not handle the pesticides, but work in fields, greenhouses, nurseries or other areas where the pesticides are used. Special additional training needs to be given to early entry employees. Handlers are those who

mix, load apply pesticides or work with pesticide contaminated equipment. Handlers do

not need to be trained if they are already licensed applicators.

The standards include worker training, displaying the pesticide safety poster, providing

employees access to labeling information and posting a centrally located application list

of pesticide treatments on the establishment. Special training is required for handlers

or
workers who do early-entry work.

Agriculture employers are required by law to meet WPS. A helpful resource is OSU Extension Bulletin 843, "The WPS for Agricultural Pesticides - How to Comply and What Employers Need to Know." It's also available on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/catalog/subpage7.htm>

Workers must receive WPS training before they accumulate five days of entry into a pesticide treated area and at least once every five years. Handlers must be trained before they do any handling task. The training covers topics such as appropriate clothes to wear, personal hygiene and understanding posted pesticide signs. Other topics include the health of the worker's family such as never taking pesticides home, showering immediately after work and laundering work clothes separately.

WPS training also includes recognizing signs of pesticide poisoning and emergency procedures. "Protect Yourself from Pesticides - Guide for Agricultural Workers" is a manual designed for workers. We have a limited supply of manuals, but more are available at www.gemplers.com. The Pesticide Education Program also has videos available for WPS training that are in both English and Spanish. All these are designed to complement a live-speaker training program.