

OP sheep dips

...The UK government is to reauthorize the use of organophosphate (OP) sheep dips after the Veterinary Products Committee (VPC) warned that the ban was leading to problems in animal welfare. The VPC says clearer packaging and labelling of OP dips will reduce the risk to farm workers.

...UK farmers who believed they were poisoned by organophosphate sheep dip have been advised by their own lawyers to drop their claim for damages. Up to 50 farmers have been told that the case has no more than a 50% chance of succeeding. Many scientific tests were carried out, including nerve conduction analysis, bone examination, immune testing, and psychometric tests. Although some believe there is a clear pattern in the results obtained that implicate organophosphorus pesticides in ill-health among farmers, the methodologies adopted in the tests were not entirely sound. The lawyers believe that there is not sufficient scientific evidence to support claims for poisoning.

French court fines anti-GM protestors

In France four anti-genetically modified (GM) food protestors have each been fined FFR 8000 for destroying a rapeseed trial site in 1999, although the money will be collected only if they offend again. The suspended fines followed a high profile trial in early September in the southwest town of Foix, at which the four were found guilty of causing wilful damage. The oilseed research organisation Cetiom, the plaintiff in the case, declined to claim for material damages, but has called for a national debate on the need for farm-scale trials. This case is in contrast to the recent trial of 28 Greenpeace activists in the UK who were cleared of all charges of criminal damage following similar disruption to on-farm GM research.

Pesticide burning in Mozambique halted

Environmental and community activists have succeeded in stopping a controversial Danish-funded project to incinerate obsolete pesticides at a cement factory in Matola, 15 km from Maputo. The Danish firm Monberg and Thorson was proposing a project costing \$8.8 M to help Mozambique set up a toxic waste disposal facility, in order to incinerate 500 tons of obsolete pesticides collected

from around the country. Of these, 42 tons contained products banned world-wide and ranked as WHO Class 1 pesticides. The kiln in Matola, which recently emitted thick smoke for 40 minutes due to an electro-filter malfunction, has a poor pollution and worker safety record. An independent environmental impact study, which was carried out by the Mozambican consultant firm Impacto, the British firm Environmental Resources Management and the South African-based Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, criticised the project for failing to consider less dangerous alternatives to incineration of the pesticides, such as exportation to waste treatment stations with a safer track record. To return 200 tons of the obsolete pesticides to the original manufacturers, Bayer and Zeneca, and send the remainder to a waste station in South Africa would have cost only \$2.2 M.

Methyl bromide

...The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is to review a US final rule which would put back the withdrawal of the fumigant methyl bromide until 1 January 2005. The Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule in 1999 which required a phasing out of the substance by 1 January 2001. This is four years ahead of the deadline in the Montreal Protocol. The US agriculture sector stresses that the early withdrawal puts it at a disadvantage as no other pesticide is available and that other countries will still be able to use methyl bromide until 2005.

...Cytec Industries Inc has received regulatory approval from the EPA to market Eco2Fume phosphine fumigant for food applications, including grains, nuts, and fruits. Approval for use in non-food applications was gained in December 1999. The product can be used as an alternative to methyl bromide in stored product or structural applications and is the first new alternative approved by the EPA (<http://www.cytec.com>)

Canadian agrochemical imports into USA

A US Senator has introduced legislation that would enable US farmers to import certain herbicides from Canada that are cheaper than their American equivalents, but are almost identical to those already registered by the EPA for use in the US. The legislation was triggered by an EPA ruling earlier in 2000 that North Dakota farmers

and dealers could not import the Canadian version of Zeneca Ag Products' herbicide Achieve. Achieve 80 DG is sold in Canada, Achieve 40 DG in the US. The Canadian version is twice as strong but costs only \$10/acre compared with \$16/acre for the US version. The legislation would enable a state to register a Canadian pesticide for distribution and use within the state.

France to reduce pesticide applications

The French government will invest FFR 83 M to reduce pesticide application and therefore pollution to waterways. FFR 15 M of this figure will be invested in national measures against pollution of waterways and FFR 68 M is earmarked for action in particularly affected regions. The government will introduce tighter controls on pesticide use and will focus on products with low toxicity levels. The pesticides classified as particularly hazardous to waterways include atrazine and diuron. The French government plans to collect unused pesticides and packaging materials, and will introduce tighter controls on the general use of agrochemicals by the farming industry. Conditions of registration will become stricter and compulsory monitoring of spraying equipment will be introduced in 2003.

Large-scale GM plantings in the UK

Despite strong opposition, the UK government has given Aventis permission to proceed with 21 genetically modified (GM) oilseed rape trials in England in September. Aventis' subsidiary, Aventis CropScience UK, will sow the herbicide-tolerant GM oilseed rape as part of a farm-scale evaluation programme. This is despite calls in August 2000 from a UK panel for stricter testing of GM contamination, following Advanta's inadvertent sale of GM contaminated seed to farmers in April. The government has said that a separation of 50-400 M between neighbouring farms and experimental locations would ensure that any cross pollination could only occur at diminishingly small levels.

Rise in EPA pesticide registrations

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) pesticide programs office has reported that the number of annual pesticide regis-

tration decisions of EPA has risen since the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) in 1996. The EPA registered 12 new conventional active ingredients in fiscal 1999, including 6 reduced-risk pesticides, according to a registration summary. The EPA registered 9 new conventional active ingredients in 1996, including 3 reduced-risk pesticides. The summary stated that the office is likely to register 14 new conventional pesticides in fiscal 2000, ending September 30. The EPA, which expects to make a decision on 8 additional new conventional active ingredients before the end of 2000, aims to render a decision on 6 alternatives to organophosphate insecticides in fiscal year 2000 and nine in fiscal 2001.

The glassy-winged sharpshooter

Causing a commotion in California is a tiny leafhopper known as the glassy-winged sharpshooter, which transmits Pierce's disease to wine-grape vines; the insect has already infested 13 California counties, including Contra Costa. Despite the threat posed to the wine industry by the insect, there is stiff criticism in Sonoma County, California, to the possibility of forced pesticide ground spraying. The state issued emergency regulations this summer for trapping the glassy-winged sharpshooter and for monitoring the movement of its host plants, including shipments of bulk grapes and ornamental plants by nurseries.

Counties were asked for information about their abatement plans. Under the state agriculture code, officials may go onto private property to eradicate a pest that threatens farm crops. A "No Spray Action Network" – a coalition of citizens has formed in the last month over the issue. New Napa county regulations list two pesticides as "shown in preliminary laboratory tests to apparently be effective against all life stages" of the insect: Marathon II, containing imidacloprid, and Tame, containing fenprothrin.

Snippets

...a UK government survey on pesticide residues in food revealed that of a total of 2500 food samples tested, only 1.6% exceeded the legal limits. The report can be viewed on the UK Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) website at <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk>.

...the European Commission has issued a proposal that would add to water quality plans a group of priority pollutants targeted for phaseout within 20 years. The list is likely to include chlorpyrifos and lindane. Under a commission draft proposal, pollutants would be placed in 5 priority categories, the first containing the most hazardous chemicals - all of these being automatically banned within 20 years. Chemicals in group 5 would definitely not be part of any ban.

...there is no need for immediate restrictions on the organophosphate pesticide chlorpyrifos, according to a report by the UK Advisory Committee on Pesticides. The report underscores the need for further research as it concludes that the safety of chlorpyrifos should be re-evaluated within a year when results of new scientific studies become available.

...The Dutch agricultural authority has reapproved the use of 11 pesticide substances currently banned. The government has decided that these substances are essential to the Dutch agricultural sector. These substances are fenbutatin oxide, chloridazon, parathion-ethyl, dichlorvos, propachlor, simazine, penconazole, pirimiphos-methyl, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos and carbofuran. New legislation will be passed to make their sale, use and possession legal in the Netherlands.

...According to the Department of Pesticide Regulation, Californian consumption of pesticides was down by 11.7 M pounds in 1999. This was the first drop in three years. Total usage in the US state was 202.6 M pounds. Usage of organophosphates and carbamates were down by nearly 800,000 pounds compared with 1998. The area treated with chemicals classified as carcinogens and reproductive toxins fell but the amount used rose by 2 M pounds. This was mainly due to the fumigants 1,3-D and metam-sodium.

EVER THOUGHT OF WRITING AN ARTICLE FOR PESTICIDE OUTLOOK?

The Editor would welcome articles for *Pesticide Outlook*. The aim of the journal is to publish readable up-to-date, interesting articles for a wide audience, which should be understandable without any assumed specialist knowledge. They should have an introduction, a few sections of "meat" arranged to give a logical flow of argument, and end with a conclusion summing things up and pointing the way forward. Articles can range in length from 500-2000 words. Photographs, diagrams, tables *etc.* are welcomed to increase the visual appeal of the article.

Please note that contributions are refereed by two members of our Editorial Board and so publication is not guaranteed. A small honorarium is paid on publication.

Please send manuscripts to *Hamish Kidd, Pesticide Outlook, The Royal Society of Chemistry, Thomas Graham House, Science Park, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 0WF. FAX +44 (0)1223 420247; email KIDDH@RSC.ORG.*