

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) treaty finalised

Diplomats from 122 countries finalised the text of a legally binding treaty at the INC-5 meeting in Johannesburg in December 2000. The treaty will require governments to minimise and eliminate an initial list of 12 toxic chemicals which include eight pesticides (aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene), two industrial chemicals (PCBs and hexachloro-benzene) and two unwanted by-products of combustion and industrial processes (dioxins and furans). The treaty sets out control measures covering the production, import, export, disposal and use of POPs. Governments are to promote the best available technologies and practices for replacing existing POPs while preventing the development of new POPs. A POPs Review Committee will consider additional candidates for the POPs list on a regular basis to ensure that the treaty remains dynamic and responsive to new scientific findings. A financial "mechanism" will help developing countries and countries with economies in transition. "New and additional" funding and technical assistance will be provided.

Most of the 12 chemicals are subject to an immediate ban. However, a health-related exemption has been granted for DDT, which is still needed in many countries to control malarial mosquitoes. This will permit governments to protect their citizens from malaria until they are able to replace DDT with chemical and non-chemical alternatives that are cost-effective and environmentally friendly. The meeting was the fifth and final POPs negotiating session and was attended by some 600 participants. The treaty will be formally adopted and signed by ministers and other plenipotentiaries at a Diplomatic Conference in Stockholm on 22–23 May 2001. Governments must then ratify and, when 50 have done so, the treaty will enter into force; this process normally takes several years. For more information on the POPs negotiations see *Pesticide Outlook* 2000, **11**, 123 and <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops/>

Swedish ban on BioAgri's Cedomon removed

Kemikalieinspektionen (KemI), Sweden, has withdrawn its ban on BioAgri's biological fungicidal seed dressing Cedomon. This product consists of the bacterium *Pseudomonas chloraphis* and is used to protect cereals. KemI imposed a temporary

sales ban on Cedomon in spring 2000 when it learned that the bacterium produced a metabolite that was a suspected carcinogen and requested further information from BioAgri. It was established that the metabolite was broken down rapidly and that the bacterium was unable to survive at human body temperature; furthermore it was not spread via plants. The agent has now been approved until February 2002 but it is required that every batch produced must be examined to check that the concentration of the metabolite 2,3-diepoxy-2,3-didehydrohizoxin does not exceed 0.24 mg/l Cedomon. Provisional EU approval has been granted for Cedomon and at some point a decision will be made whether to place it in the Annex 1 list of products that can be used in all member states. See www.bioagri.se/

Own use parallel import approvals

Own use parallel import approval is where, in the UK, individuals or groups of farmers may apply for and receive an approval for use and storage of a foreign pesticide/plant protection product if they can prove that it is identical to a product already approved in the UK. The product may not be advertised, marketed or sold and may only be used by the individual or group who have been granted the approval. In order to make this system easier to use, the UK's Pesticides Safety Directorate will release a list of approvals granted, showing the imported products and their equivalent UK product. A table lists existing own-use approvals and their identical products: for example, Allegro (BASF), Belgium (country of origin), identical to Landmark (BASF) UK product, MAFF number M08889. Further information can be found in *Pesticides Monitor*, Nov-Dec 2000 (11), 1–2 (Available from: The Stationery Office, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, UK).

UK pesticide tax

Following the rejection of the agrochemical industry's latest proposal for voluntary measures in the November 2000 pre-budget statement, UK government plans to introduce a pesticide tax will be fought to the end. The industry's proposal was intended to minimise the potential impact of agrochemicals but it was not considered adequate by the government. The government will introduce a £120 M/y tax in the second quarter of 2001 unless a revised package can be agreed. The UK's Crop Protection

Association (CPA), representing the agrochemical industry, proposed voluntary measures to regulate pesticides which included training, research into integrated crop management, additional spray equipment, further promotion of best practice and annual crop protection plans. This would have cost the industry £11.5 M/y. The CPA is convinced that any tax on pesticides would damage UK agriculture without any environmental benefits. The CPA will now work with farming groups to try to identify an alternative solution. The CPA does not believe that pesticide taxes are the most effective means of reducing pesticide use and it has put together an alternative plan to help regulate their use. A summary of the 24 revised proposals (February 2001) minimising the environmental impacts of crop protection chemicals can be downloaded from <http://www.cropprotection.org.uk/> and a copy of the full version of the submission can be obtained by contacting Sue Thompson at the Crop Protection Association (Tel. 01733 349225 or e-mail: sue.t@cropprotection.org.uk).

Two pesticides added to Rotterdam Convention

Two insecticides suspected of being carcinogenic (ethylene oxide and ethylene chloride) were added to the list of dangerous chemical products under international control by the 6 November 2000 meeting of experts from more than 100 countries charged with completing the Rotterdam Convention (formerly the PIC Procedure). The Convention was adopted in 1998 under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and sets out special procedures for the import of 22 pesticides and 5 industrial chemicals products. Countries have the right to refuse to allow imports of these substances and must be informed in advance about potential dangers to health and the environment. 73 countries have signed the convention, but it has only been ratified by 11. It will not come into full force until it obtains 50% ratification. Both ethylene oxide and ethylene chloride are used as agricultural pesticides on stored foodstuffs; they are also used in making industrial chemical products. Only the agricultural use of these products (already banned in 20 countries) is covered by the Rotterdam Convention.

For more information on the Rotterdam Convention see *Pesticide Outlook* and

<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/PIC/pichome.htm/>

Snippets

...The UK government is calling for agreement on national indicators of the impact of the use of pesticides on the environment. The five criteria which have been put forward are:

- water quality
- area of cereal field margin under environmental management
- measurement of operator training levels on farm
- investigation of proportion of active agronomists who are on the BASIS professional register
- uptake of new technologies.

Monitoring of any improvements would be better achieved if benchmark levels of these indicators could be established.

...Bayer is prepared to withdraw two thirds of its 60 agrochemicals from the market, a decision which was made in the context of proposed new European environmental regulations. This will result in a small decrease in turnover and profits but an increase in income from the remaining products. The European Commission

wants around 800 insecticidal formulations to be thoroughly reviewed.

...a protest against the use of Gaucho, Bayer's insecticide imidacloprid, has been held in France by beekeepers' organisations. Since 1996, over 450,000 apiaries claim to have been affected by the insecticide and beekeepers are seeking a ban on the product. However, Bayer claims that studies were partial and take no account of recent studies that illustrate the insecticide is harmless.

...The US Environmental Protection Agency has revised its assessment of the pesticide malathion. It now says that the organophosphate does not pose risks to the public in drinking water, food or through mosquito or cotton pest control. Some risks for agricultural workers have been identified. The agency is considering if organophosphates meet the stricter risk assessment standards of the Food Quality Protection Act. The EPA estimates that malathion usage is 16.7 M pounds/yr.

...on 14 December 2000 the Dutch Second Chamber passed a motion by the Christen-Unie party that farmers and horticulturalists should pay a tax on pesticides. The motion had the support of PvdA,

GroenLinks, SP, and D66. It is hoped to use the money raised to stimulate the development and use of more environmentally friendly agents.

...The European Commission is to withdraw its authorization for all pesticides containing the active ingredient tecnazene because of an insufficient safety data. The withdrawal will take around 6 months, but member states can grant a period of grace of up to 20 months to allow for disposal and use of existing stocks.

...The US EPA has reached an agreement with producers of diazinon on the phasing out of the insecticide in lawn and garden uses. The plans call for an end to sales of diazinon for use in the home by December 2002; and an end to lawn and garden use by December 2003. Certain agricultural uses will continue, but current overall use of over 13 M lbs/y will fall 75%. Syngenta Crop Protection USA is to phase out all of its US diazinon insecticide business by 2004.

...on 4 December 2000, the European Commission adopted a Directive amending Annex I of Directive 91/414/EEC on the marketing of plant protection products so as to include a further active substance, lambda-cyhalothrin from 1 January 2002.

The Pesticide Manual
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