

Hazardous and obsolete pesticides

...FAO report on obsolete pesticides

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation released a report on 8 May 2001 declaring that millions of people and the environment are at risk from obsolete pesticides. An estimated 500,000 tonnes of old and unused pesticides that have been banned or expired are creating a danger to health in developing and transition countries, the report said. According to FAO, the quantities of these obsolete pesticides in Africa and the Near East are estimated at over 100,000 tonnes, in Asia at over 200,000 tonnes and in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union at more than 200,000 tonnes. The pesticide waste, which has accumulated over more than 30 years, contains some of the most dangerous insecticides such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin and heptachlor, that have been banned in most countries. As the pesticides deteriorate, they create even more harmful by-products that can seep into nearby farm fields, houses, food stores and markets. The removal and destruction of pesticides is expensive, with disposal costs estimated at \$3/kg or litre. Funding for disposal has so far been provided almost exclusively by governments and aid agencies. FAO called on chemical companies represented by CropLife International (previously known as Global Crop Protection Federation) to contribute urgently to the global disposal of pesticides. It also called upon its members to apply environmentally friendly Integrated Pest Management methods and to drastically reduce the use of pesticides (<http://www.eis.be>)

....Ethiopian pesticide stockpile

CropLife International is said to be close to reaching an agreement with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) over aid in disposing with obsolete pesticides in Ethiopia. The FAO estimates that the stockpile rose from 1500 tonnes in 1997 to about 2500 tonnes in 2001. Some reports indicate that the stockpile could be as high as 2800 tonnes. The chemicals are located at over 900 sites. It is believed that there are 100,000-500,000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides stored around the world. For more information on CropLife International see <http://www.croplife.org> and page 141 of this issue of *Pesticide Outlook*.

...European chemical industry response to Rotterdam Convention

The European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic), the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA), which is affiliated to Cefic, and the European Association of Chemical Distributors (FECC) have started implementing a unilateral initiative to notify exports of certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides on a voluntary basis. EU legislation currently provides for notification of first exports of chemicals which are banned or severely restricted under Regulation 2455/92/EEC. The Cefic/FECC initiative is an early application of the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, opened for signature in September 1998. The initiative will allow the chemical industry, the European Commission and national authorities to gain experience of procedures that are not expected to become legally binding for another two years (<http://www.eis.be>)

....disposal in the UK

A national scheme for the disposal of unwanted and obsolete pesticides is being set up under a Control of Pesticides Association (CPA)-led consortium. This is part of the package of measures accepted as an alternative to the pesticide tax. It will be similar to the disposal scheme which existed in the early 1990s.

Outlook for agchems in EU

Conditions could worsen on the European agchems market if the EU adopts a new agricultural policy with strong reductions in production subsidies. Analysts expect the market to be relatively sluggish in 2001. The market declined in 2000 and this looks likely again in 2001 with regard to value. The decline could run over into 2002. There is cautious optimism over the US agchems market in the short-term. But the European position is viewed less hopefully. The principal causes of the slowdown in Europe are low crop prices and a sharp drop in farmers' incomes. There is no sign of any lasting recovery in crop prices at present, this applying as much to the US as Europe. If the EU goes ahead with a radical overhaul of its subsidies system, some believe production of cereals and other commodities could fall by up to 15-20%. Agrochemical producers are thus developing strategies to cope with a possible decline in the W European market.

No ban on contentious pesticides in Netherlands

Farmers and horticulturalists in the Netherlands will be able to use 11 controversial pesticides as usual during the 2001 growing season. The president of the court of law in the Hague rejected calls by a number of environmental organizations for these agents to be banned. The Stichting Natuur en Milieu, the Zuid-Hollandse Milieufederatie, and the Vereniging van Waterbedrijven had brought a lawsuit against the government to prevent use of these pesticides which they say are harmful to the environment and ground water.

Zineb not in Annex I

The European Commission has confirmed that zineb will not be included in Annex 1 under Directive 91/414/EEC Annex 1 since it is no longer being supported in its review programme. Although authorization will be revoked within 6 months the disposal, storage and use of existing stocks will remain legal for 18 months from March 2001.

Sweden to limit home garden use of herbicides

The Swedish National Chemicals Inspectorate (KemI) has issued a proposal limiting the application of herbicides in home gardens in an effort to prevent damage to cultivated plants and to human health. KemI has expressed concern over the increasing use of glyphosate in home gardens, along with other herbicides such as acetic acid, dicamba and mecoprop. KemI has also proposed that only trained professionals should be allowed to use previously approved herbicides. The organisation expects to obtain a decision for the proposal not later than 2002.

Integrated farming in the Netherlands

The Dutch government plans to have at least 90% of its arable farmers following approved integrated growing systems by 2005. Failure to achieve the target will result in legislature to enforce the measures. Certification and control procedures are already being tested on 250 arable farms throughout the country. Pesticides are also to be discouraged by taxation of the use of active ingredients. The farming industry fears that agrochemical use on farms is to be suppressed below even "marginal return levels".

New registrations

...Syngenta announces first registration for pyriftalid

Syngenta has been granted marketing approval by the South Korean authorities for the herbicide pyriftalid for use in rice paddies. This is the active ingredient's first registration. It will be used with cinosulfuron in the broad-spectrum product APIRO Ace GR. Pyriftalid is particularly effective against the grass *Echinochloa*. This is a difficult weed to control in rice paddies.

...methoxyfenozide authorised for EU-wide sale under plant health directive.

The European Commission has passed a Decision accepting the conformity in principle of the dossiers it has received for detailed analysis with a view to including methoxyfenozide (RH 2485) in Annex I of Directive 91/414/EEC on the marketing of plant health products. While analysis is being carried out by the UK in order to

decide whether the substance should be included in the list of authorised products, Rohm and Haas may be granted provisional authorisation for sale of the product by Member States. This is limited to a maximum period of three years. (For further information see www.eis.be)

...Syngenta receives USA registration for Callisto corn herbicide.

Syngenta Crop Protection announced that its new Callisto corn herbicide has received registration from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under its reduced-risk pesticide programme. Callisto is registered as a post-emergence corn herbicide and may be applied from crop emergence. The active ingredient in Callisto is mesotrione, a synthetic relative of natural herbicides produced by the *Callistemon citrinus* plant. Syngenta has also received approval for the sale of Callisto in Germany and Austria in late 2000, and in France and Holland in May 2001.

Supermarkets

....the UK supermarket chain Tesco has approved a new potato blight fungicide for use in the production of its Nature's Choice potatoes. The fungicide consists of a mixture of the new active ingredient zoixium and mancozeb.

....the Co-op, another UK supermarket chain which is also the UK's largest farming organisation, is to ban more than 20 pesticides, including so-called hormone disrupters and organophosphates, from its produce. The move comes with a challenge to governments, the EU, the agrochemical industry and other retailers to embark on a radical rethink of pesticide safety and regulatory controls. The Co-op has drawn up a plan, after consultation with Sustain—the alliance for better food and farming—and Friends of the Earth. It aims to raise flagging consumer confidence in food by encouraging more sustainable production.