

North America

...endocrine disruption

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to study the endocrine disrupting potential of a selected group of 35-50 active ingredients from a list of almost 1000 possible culprits. The Office of Science Coordination and Policy wants the development of an endocrine-disruptor screening programme to be advanced speedily. A list of the chosen active ingredients has not been released nor is it clear how study results will be disseminated.

...azinphos-methyl and phosmet

New EPA restrictions are to be placed on the use of the pesticides azinphos-methyl and phosmet for the protection of agricultural workers. The number of crops on which azinphos-methyl can be used is being severely restricted: 28 usages will be cancelled immediately and seven phased out over four years. Registration for eight crops will continue on a time-limited basis for four years, during which time further studies will be carried out to determine whether usage can continue.

...new EPA regulations on pesticide disposal

Makers of pest management products will be required to give additional content concerning the disposal of used pesticide containers by consumers under a new Pesticide Registration (PR) notice released by the US Environmental Protection Agency. The notice does not cover antimicrobial pesticides, according to the Consumer Specialty Products Association. Existing regulations require consumers to use newspapers to wrap pesticide containers before discarding them. Pesticide manufacturers are required to inform consumers to coordinate with local solid waste agencies or call a toll-free number when discarding the products beginning 1 October 2003.

...Telone

The US EPA has decided that the cancer risk posed by Dow AgroScience's Telone (1,3-dichloropropene) is outweighed by the fumigants benefits. The product is proposed as an alternative to methyl bromide which will be phased out by 2005. The EPA is still assessing the threat to groundwater. Telone is classified as a restricted use pesticide which can only be used by certified applicators or workers supervised by certified applicators.

...toxicity testing methodology

An improved version of an acute oral toxicity test procedure is to be considered by an advisory body of the Environmental Protection Agency. The existing Up and Down Procedure may be replaced by an improved version that is likely to replace the current acute oral toxicity test in Environmental Protection Agency test guidelines used in pesticide and toxic substances tests. The improved version of the test uses fewer test animals.

...chlorpyrifos

The organophosphate pesticide chlorpyrifos will no longer be allowed for practically all residential use in the USA. The only residential use still allowed will be in childproof ant and cockroach baits. Chlorpyrifos is still widely used in agricultural applications on a large range of crops, but residue tolerances on several crops are being lowered. A number of health and safety issues, including labelling, relating to occupational risk to those applying the pesticide are also being addressed by the Environmental Protection Agency. Ecological risks are being addressed by reductions in applications of the pesticide per season and reductions in application rate per acre.

...relative potency factors

A new list of 29 relative potency factors (RPF) has been issued by the Office of Pesticide Programs. The relative potency factor allows addition of pesticide residues as though they were all the same chemical, and are necessary for the cumulative risk assessment of organophosphate pesticides. The basis of the new values of RPFs is brain cholinesterase inhibition in female rats, calculated with reference to a benchmark dose. The index chemical is methamidophos with an RPF value of 1.0.

UK

...import of cheaper pesticides

A UK Appeal Court has ruled that the test for the import of pesticides should depend upon them being "essentially similar" (rather than 'identical') in composition to those on sale in the UK. The NFU and DEFRA worked together to win the case against the Crop Protection Association. The UK's Pesticides Safety Directorate will now have greater flexibility to issue licences for parallel imports from Europe meeting its standards. The decision will give farmers access to cheaper imported pesticides.

...OP dip claims given green light

A UK judge has given the go-ahead to farmers who believe they were poisoned by organophosphate (OP) sheep dips to continue with their claims for damages. The judge refused to strike out claims despite an application by agrochemical companies at a High Court hearing in November 2001. In a preliminary hearing of a multi-party action brought by farmers who claim they were poisoned by OPs, most claims brought against the agrochemical companies survived a review following a challenge to the validity of the cases by the defendants. The hearing arose from applications made by the agrochemicals companies in a process which has taken more than 18 months.

Europe

Annex 1 under 91/414/EEC

On 12 October 2001, the European Commission adopted a Directive approving the inclusion of acibenzolar-S-methyl, cyclanilide, ferric phosphate, pymetrozine and pyraflufen-ethyl for use as plant protection products, in Annex I. Similar decisions were made on 20 November 2001 to include glyphosate and thifensulfuron-methyl, and on 28 November 2001 to include 2,4-D.

However, because the dossiers have not been received for alachlor, alpha-cypermethrin, benalaxyl, benomyl, bromoxynil, chlorothalonil, chlorotoluron, cypermethrin, dinocap, endosulfan, ioxynil and methamidophos by 21 November 2001, the decision on whether they should be added to Annex I of Directive 91/414/EEC was postponed by the European Commission.

Obsolete stocks in Nepal

CropLife International has offered the expertise of its obsolete stocks team to the government of Nepal for the removal and destruction of 75 tonnes of obsolete pesticides in government warehouses. Although only a small proportion of the obsolete pesticides were originally supplied by the member countries of CropLife International, the major manufacturers will contribute both technically and financially to any disposal project led by the Nepalese government. (For more information see www.croplife.org)