

USA*Bayer pushes for human pesticide tests*

Bayer is pushing for a change in international convention to allow companies to conduct pesticide and GM tests on human beings. The ban is in place as a result of the post-Second World War Nuremberg Code and various federal laws. Although the issue under discussion centres on pesticides, Bayer's efforts are also understood to be linked to its considerable interests in GM crops.

Indiana targets pesticide education in retail stores

A newly enacted Indiana law called the Consultant Registration Rule now requires that retailers selling pesticides must train and educate employees who offer advice on garden and pest control products. Establishments who sell such products and offer advice must be licensed as consultants. This is believed to be the first law of this kind to be enacted.

Europe*Pesticide residues*

According to the European Commission's health authority, 40.2% of fruit and vegetable samples tested in 2000 contained pesticide residues (compared with 36.3% in 1999). 45,000 samples were tested for 151 different pesticides. 36% samples contained residues below the legal limit and 4.2% residues above the limit. The study revealed that pesticide residues in the fruits, vegetables and cereals tested in 2000 were on average 4.5% higher than the legal level. The report's authors found that in Europe as a whole the amount of residues has been increasing over the past 5 years. However this could be as a result of better detection and better targeting. In France 54.4% fruits, vegetables and cereals contained detectable pesticide residues (compared with 49.3% in 1999). 7.7% contained residues above the legal limit. In response to the study, the UIPP stressed that the limits were legal restrictions and did not imply any health risk. However it did acknowledge that the study showed users were not following manufacturer's instruction for use.

MEPs calls for review of 91/414

On 30 May 2002, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of adopting a request for a complete overhaul of the EU Directive on marketing pesticides (Directive 91/414/EC). The EU's executive

arm is not expected to table a proposal, in the form of a communication, on this issue before 2003. In practice, the European Parliament is pressing Commissioners Wallstrom (Environment) and Byrne (Health and Consumer Protection) to present a Directive at an early date to create a programme for reducing the use of pesticides, plus target figures for the reduction process and a firm timetable. Environmental protection bodies have decided to urge the Commission into action and have drawn up their own proposals for a Directive on Pesticide Use Reduction in Europe (PURE). Prepared by the Pesticides Action Network, Europe (PAN-Europe), the text was unveiled on 20 May. The recommended Directive speaks about phasing out dependence on pesticides and discontinuing them completely where possible. The Directive applies solely to the commercial uses of pesticides, as defined in the plant health marketing Directive (91/414/EEC), now in force.

Fungicides*Tin fungicides*

This UK potato season will be the last in which tin-containing compounds will be available for blight control; they are not being supported at the EU pesticide review. Growers are therefore expected to be changing their spray regimes. Electis (zoxium + mancozeb) and Ranman Twin-pack (cyazofamid) are two new products with novel formulations.

EU sets ceiling for copper use in organic farming

New legislation published on 16 March 2002 in the Official Journal of the European Community sets the maximum permissible level of copper used by organic farmers at 8 kg/hectare/year with effect from 23 March 2002. This level will continue until 1 January 2006 when it will be reduced to 6 kg/hectare/year. European Member States will be able to obtain an exemption for perennial crops, but France has decided against doing so. The threat of a ban has stimulated organic potato growers to lobby against the move. They claim that loss of copper sulfate could reduce potato yields by a third.

OP insecticides*OP conference*

The first national UK conference on organophosphate poisoning took place in

Powys, Wales in early May. Organised by the Institute of Rural Health and OPUS, a charity supporting sufferers from OP exposure, it brought medical and legal experts together with farmers who believe they have been affected by sheep dips.

Actellic dust to be banned in UK

The Pesticides Safety Directorate has withdrawn approval for the use of Actellic dust insecticide from the end of August 2003. The pirimiphos methyl-based product is used to control in-store grain pests. The ban leaves only non-dust formulations of Actellic and Reldan (chlorpyrifos methyl) approved for farmer use. Demand for the dust has created a shortage as application of liquid formulations requires extra handling of the grain at a cost of £5 to £10/tonne. This has stimulated an increased interest in fumigation by phosphine gas, contractor-applied at a cost of £1 to £4/tonne.

EPA organophosphate cumulative risk assessment

A revised risk assessment of the cumulative risks from organophosphate pesticides shows that almost all currently allowed uses meet the strictest safety standards. Initial results from this scientific assessment provide good news for US consumers. The conclusions strongly support a high level of confidence in the safety of the food supply. The assessment evaluates cumulative risks from exposure from food, drinking water, and residential sources to 30 organophosphates that inhibit cholinesterase.

OPP issues revised potency factors

The Office of Pesticide Programs of the US Environmental Protection Agency has issued a revision of its table of relative potency factors (RPF) for organophosphate pesticides. The chosen reference chemical with an RPF made equal to 1 is methamidophos.

Insecticides*DEET insect repellents in Canada*

Health Canada is to ban the sale of products containing more than 30% of the active ingredient DEET. The ban will also extend to combined sunscreen/repellent products on the basis that the dosage of DEET will be excessive. The ban will come into effect in December 2004 after which time no products of any kind containing more than 30% of DEET will be able to be legally sold.

Methyl bromide

EPA proposes extension of methyl bromide production

Although developed countries have agreed to stop the production and use of methyl bromide by 2005, developing countries have agreed a 2015 deadline for a similar phase out. The US Environmental Protection Agency regulates the production of methyl bromide for export by a system of allowances and the proposal for extension of methyl bromide production means that producers will be allowed to produce, for export, during 2002 to 2004, 15% of their average domestic production from 1991. This percentage could change before the 2005 deadline when all production must cease.

Voluntary initiative

...new website

The Voluntary Initiative now has a new website created by the Crop Protection Association at the request of the Voluntary Initiative Steering Group. The new site can be seen at <http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk>. The site provides a wealth of background on the Initiative, as well as access to downloadable Steering Group minutes and all project reports.

...register for spray operators

A new National Register of Spray Operators (NRoSO) was unveiled on 25 June at the Sprays and Sprayers event in Whittlesford, UK. The register offers operators official recognition of their competence and commitment when applying crop protection products.

Operators wishing to apply should contact the National Proficiency Tests Council on Tel: 024 7669 6553. registration costs £15 a year. See <http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk> for more details.

EU farm policy shakeup

The European Commission has approved a radical reform of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) what will sever the links between farm subsidies and output. Farmers would be offered a single 'direct payment' based on past income, providing strict environmental conditions are met. Farmers in candidate EU countries would

receive the same level of direct aid from 2011, not 2013 as originally envisaged.

Atrazine

In USA

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has called on the EPA to ban the use of atrazine. It has also called for the EPA and Justice Department to begin a criminal investigation of Syngenta, the main producer of atrazine, for covering up the findings of two studies. One study found that atrazine causes hermaphroditism in male tadpoles at 0.1 ppb in water; Syngenta says it will supply results of its own studies, which refutes this frog research. The other study found that workers exposed to atrazine at a Syngenta plant in Gabriel, LA, had 3.5 times the average cancer rate for Louisiana. Syngenta says it has been completely forthcoming in supplying data on atrazine and all the prostate cancers were picked up during its medical screening programme for all employees.

In Australia

Subject to proper use, the achievement of new residue limits in food, and new labelling and other regulations, atrazine has been declared safe for use in Australia. Most concern is expressed about high runoff percentages, up to 90% in some districts in Northern Australia. The herbicide is also a commonly encountered contaminant. Label modifications instruct users to avoid certain distribution and handling situations that might increase the possibility of runoff.

Glufosinate-ammonium

The Crop Protection Association and Aventis CropScience have launched a joint court action against the UK's Pesticide Safety Directorate following the agency's release of commercially sensitive data submitted during the approval process for the Aventis herbicide, glufosinate-ammonium. Friends of the Earth asked for the data to be released as it claims that the herbicide is known to have toxic side effects.

Nitrofen

Food contamination with nitrofen, originally reported to apply to a number of

"organic farms" only, is now believed to have been used on conventional farms as well. Furthermore the contamination may have been going on for more than three years since 1999. The longer contamination period drastically widens the number of animals that may have been contaminated and substantially increases the volume of suspect meat products.

Endangered Species Act

The US Environmental Protection Agency has made a temporary settlement to a lawsuit filed against it under the Endangered Species Act. The agreement by the EPA is to issue a proposal for a review embracing not only the EPA but also the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Under the 60-day terms of the consent decree the EPA will, should it sign the decree, submit its own conclusions on a number of pesticides to the other agencies for review. The EPA holds an option for further negotiations and it may exercise this option following public comment on its proposals.

UK minor use pesticides

Thanks to efforts by the Horticultural Development Council (HDC), who recently published a *Pesticide Gap Analysis* for 34 major horticultural crops, the European Commission has decided that the use of 14 of the 15 active ingredients requested by the UK horticultural industry will be permitted until 31 December 2007. As part of the EU Review Program, use of these actives was to have been revoked on 25 July 2003.

Information campaign

A pesticide information campaign based around the message READ THE LABEL FIRST! on 550 Metro buses and 10 Metrorail subway stations took place in August in Washington D.C. The campaign was part of a broader program called the Consumer Labeling Initiative, a partnership involving federal, state and local government agencies, industry and others interested in working to improve product labels on indoor insecticides, outdoor pesticides, and household hard surface cleaners.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Have a look at the *Pesticide Outlook* Website on <http://www.rsc.org/po>