

Legislation*...ratification of Rotterdam Convention*

The European Parliament is pushing for the ratification of the Rotterdam Convention which will put controls on the export and import of dangerous chemical products including twenty-six types of pesticides. There are also calls for stricter controls on up to ten types of persistent organic pollutants. Most members of Cefic (Conseil Européen des Fédérations de l'Industrie Chimique) have been following a voluntary code of practice since April 2001.

....definition of "public health pesticide"

H.R. 5329 is again being promoted by a U.S. lawmaker on Capitol Hill, supported by the pesticide industry. The provisions of H.R. 5329 would change the definition of a public health pesticide to include pesticides such as disinfectants, insect repellents and insecticides used in the home. The move is driven by the spread of west Nile virus across the country. The change to FIFRA would charge the US Environmental Protection Agency with the responsibility to consider the benefits of a product that could eliminate public health pests during its register reviews. The EPA would be required to weigh the benefits of a pesticide in controlling disease vectors against the health risk posed by the pesticide itself.

Litigation*....report on Peruvian deaths*

The families of 24 children fatally poisoned during 1999 when methyl parathion insecticide was mistaken for powdered milk could be compensated by the manufacturer, Bayer, and the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture. This follows a report by a Peruvian congressional subcommittee that also found evidence of administrative and criminal wrongdoing on the part of both Bayer and the Ministry. The families have filed a lawsuit against Bayer that is due to be heard by a judge in late 2002.

....BASF settles pesticide case

\$1.1 M is to be paid by BASF's Micro Flo pesticide business to settle EPA civil charges

regarding the falsification of pesticide ingredient import documentation. The EPA had originally sought payment of \$3.7 M. An alternative dispute resolution process reduced the amount to \$1.1 M. It is the second largest penalty assessed under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act by the EPA.

....court denies Aventis petition

A class-action lawsuit is to be brought against Aventis by hundreds of cray-fish farmers after the introduction of Icon, a rice-seed treated with the pesticide fipronil to control rice weevils produced by Aventis, caused crop losses during 2000 and 2001. Crawfish harvest fell to 16 M lbs in 2000 from 41 M lbs in 1999. The pesticide seeped into ponds containing crayfish and is blamed for their demise. Aventis claims drought was the cause of the crop losses. A minimum of \$50 M in compensation is being sought by the farmers after a Louisiana appeals court ruled that they have a right to litigate against the company.

New products*....EUP application received for bio-pesticide*

The Interregional Research Project No. 4 has submitted an application to the US Environmental Protection Agency for an experimental use permit (EUP) for the use of a bio-chemical pesticide in a trial on 3800 acres over a two-year period. The pesticide would be used on almond, citrus and other crops for the control of both insects and disease. The active ingredient is sodium metasilicate. Mixed with other ingredients it forms the pesticide known as TRIAD. The notice appeared in Federal Register 67 FR 55840 dated 30 August 2002.

Withdrawals*....Dow AgroSciences discontinues some clopyralid uses*

Dow AgroSciences has withdrawn its clopyralid herbicide products from applications on US residential lawns after a

decision by the US Environmental Protection Agency to remove residential turf uses from the label of such products. A company representative said the decision is in compliance with regulatory decisions aimed at addressing concerns on the potential for damage to sensitive plants from clopyralid residues in compost.

....Malaysia bans paraquat

Malaysia has banned the production and use of the herbicide paraquat. There will be no further registrations, and existing ones, which run for three years, will not be renewable, though they can be utilised until they expire. Paraquat is not permitted in a range of countries. In Malaysia, it was mainly used in palm oil plantations and is formulated in the country by 21 companies.

The Voluntary Initiative*....water studies*

In the UK, the new maximum level set down by the Water Framework Directive for pesticides in surface water, not just drinking water, is 1 ppb. As previous stewardship methods of controlling levels were not effective, Project 10 of the Voluntary Initiative has been set up in 6 water catchment areas. Some 8 active ingredients will be studied, with the emphasis largely on isoproturon (IPU) followed by mecoprop, at a cost of £0.3 M over 5 years. The IPU study group is comprised of DuPont, Bayer CropScience, Makhteshim Agan and Nufarm Whyte. Growers will be told the IPU rate they can use in autumn 2002: full rate according to best practice, maximum 1.5 kg/ha or a ban on its use. In the Cherwell (Oxfordshire) water catchment area, 40% of contamination came from farmyard spillage, not through field application. Water authorities generally support the new move as they finance the detection and 'clean up' of herbicides. If IPU were banned, alternatives would be even more expensive to clean up.

For more on the Voluntary Initiative see p266-269 in this issue of *Pesticide Outlook*.

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