

# Look What's Out There

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Issue 2 -- April 2002  
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## Food Quality Protection Act/Reregistration

The EPA released its final decision for phosmet (Imidan). The Agency allowed a five-year, time-limited registration for apple, apricot, blueberry (highbush), crab apple, grape, nectarine, peach, pear and plum/prune. Apparently, the EPA thinks that the benefits outweigh the risks for these crops in the current situation. The situation may change if a safer alternative becomes available or if the risks are revised upward.

The decision established the following rates for phosmet use on peaches.

- \* 2 - 4¼ lbs/A (¾ - 1 lb/100 gal)
- \* No more than 17 lbs/A per season
- \* 14 day pre-harvest interval
- \* 3 day re-entry interval

During the time-limited registration, the registrant will: 1) perform a biomonitoring study to evaluate phosmet effects on blood levels of cholinesterase, 2) provide updated information on usage/benefits of phosmet, and 3) investigate the feasibility of additional protective equipment (i.e., gloves for re-entry workers).

Registrations were canceled for household fruit trees, household ornamentals, and domestic pets. The decision did not affect current registrations for cotton, lowbush blueberry, ornamental nursery stock, pea and pecan.

**The registrant and EPA have finalized a decision to cancel all registrations for benomyl (Benlate).** The cancellation order was final January 15, 2002. Existing stocks can be sold until the end of 2002.

**All residential uses of dimethoate (Cygon) are being canceled at the request of the registrants.** The cancellation order is expected to include home gardens, buildings, recreational facilities and playgrounds. Some agricultural uses will also be canceled, including housefly treatments in farm buildings, farm animal quarters, and manure piles.

**Most residential uses of acephate (Orthene) are also being canceled at the request of the registrant.** The cancellation order is expected to include all residential indoor uses and most turfgrass sites. Acephate will still be available for golf courses, sod farms and fire ant mound treatments. The analysis of methamidaphos, another OP, may affect the acephate decision. Methamidaphos is a breakdown product of acephate.

At last count, chlopyrifos, diazinon, dimethoate or acephate will no longer be available for pest management around the home. These requests for cancellation are probably the result of registrants trying to improve their position for the upcoming cumulative assessment of the organophosphate insecticides. Registrants want to minimize the nonoccupational exposure associated with their favorite OP insecticide. The potential exposure for children is obviously much greater for residential uses. Additionally, exposure studies and risk mitigation are much easier (and cheaper) for occupational settings.

Recommendations for residential uses is being whittled down to a half sheet of paper written on just one side. Our recommendations for residential insecticides can almost be summed up in one line, "Use a pyrethroid, imidacloprid, carbaryl (Sevin) or malathion." All four of these options have serious disadvantages. Pyrethroids exacerbate problems with mites and scale insects. Additionally, some groups are already calling pyrethroids "endocrine disruptors." Using the words "endocrine disruptor" and "children" in the same sentence will become as bad as handing out cigarettes in day care centers.

Imidacloprid seems to have a strong potential for pest resistance, and it is very mobile in water. Carbaryl is very toxic to honeybees, and it is a carbamate insecticide (the group next in line for the FQPA guillotine). Malathion simply does not provide satisfactory control for many pests.

**Epidemiological studies linking pesticides and disease usually depend upon the applicator's memory; a new study investigates the reliability of that information.** If you ask an applicator if they have "ever" or "never" used a particular pesticide or practice, the "real" data and the memory match from 70-90 percent. Agreement was reduced to about 50 percent when the questions asked more specific questions about practices like duration or frequency of use. Similar agreement (around 50%) was reported when the questions related to years or days/year of mixing or applying a particular pesticide. The results are not very surprising. Most people could answer whether or not they had ever been to a baseball game, but few could tell you exactly how many games they had attended. (Epidemiology 13:1, via Agromedicine Program Update, 2-15-02)

**For the first time, a U.S. company will market a line of organically produced flowers** (Pestic. & Tox. Chem. News, 2-4-02). The company recites the usual litany for offering the organic line of flowers. It is also a useful marketing tool to differentiate your product from others. The bottom line will be economics. The value of greenhouse

flowers is astronomical, and there is no market for flowers that are not perfect. In the cases I have witnessed, greenhouse producers turned to IPM and nonchemical control methods because the pesticides did not work well enough. Additionally, the greenhouse market for pesticides is not large. They will be particularly vulnerable to pesticide losses related to FQPA and reregistration.

**The Scotts Company wants to market the first genetically modified grass.** According to the company, the grass will not need as much mowing, and it will tolerate repeated applications of herbicides. Some groups are already protesting that the environmental risks have not been fully evaluated. I think the protest groups are wasting their time. I think the U.S. public will break down the doors to buy a grass that needs less mowing and that you can simply spray to control weeds. Unlike genetically engineered foods on the market, the public will be able to identify a specific advantage for the consumer. Personally, however, I think the potential ramifications of an herbicide-resistant grass are worth considering. This new grass may move out of the yard and out to the farm.

The company says they will ask USDA for permission to sell the new grass, but I do not think there is much oversight in this area. If I am correct, only APHIS (in USDA) needs to give permission to release a new organism in the United States. Since grass is already abundant in the United States, I do not think that APHIS will have any strong objections. The company, in cooperation with Monsanto, hopes to also introduce other genetically engineered ornamental plants. (AP 2-3-02, via Chemically Speaking, 2-02)