

Look What's Out There

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Benefits of Crop Profiles and Pest Management Strategic Plans

The following information is from an article published by O. Norman Nesheim & Russell F. Mizell, III Directors, Southern Region Pest Management Center, University of Florida.

The USDA Regional Pest Management Centers established in 2000 in each USDA region are focal points for issues related to pest management and pesticide-related information. Each year several million dollars are available in the form of competitive grants to support pest management research and extension programs. The Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for these grants have become more specific in recent years reflecting the desire of the funding agencies/organizations to address important near and mid-term pest management-related projects. A common theme in some of these grant programs is to find pest management alternatives for pesticides canceled or restricted as a result of federal legislation or regulation, such as the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). The Methyl Bromide Transitions Program (MBT), Crops at Risk from FQPA Implementation (CAR), and FQPA Risk Avoidance and Mitigation for Major Food Crop Systems (RAMP) are examples.

The USDA Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) introduced the concept of crop profiles about four years ago as a means to describe the production practices for a commodity, the pest problems associated with its production, and the pest management practices (chemical and non-chemical) currently used to control the pests. Crop profiles are most frequently developed on a state by state basis but are sometimes developed on a regional or national basis for a specific crop. More recently descriptions of the type and frequency of worker activities with the crop have been added to crop profiles. Crop profiles can be used to identify areas of critical need (i.e. those crops or situations where few if any alternative control measures are available to producers). Crop

profiles do not generally identify and prioritize pest management research, regulatory, and extension education needs for a commodity.

The development of a Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP) is a method of setting pest management priorities for a commodity and demonstrating stakeholder involvement in the process. The USDA's OPMP developed the PMSP as a planning priority setting process to facilitate a transition to alternative pest management practices when one or more pesticides used to manage pests on a crop are lost as a result of regulatory review. Land grant university research and extension specialists or commodity organizations, often with the assistance of personnel from the USDA OPMP, facilitate the development of a PMSP. Growers, commodity representatives, land-grant specialists, food processors, crop consultants, and other stakeholders are generally involved in the process. Ideally, a PMSP outlines the current state of pest management for a commodity at the state, regional, or national level and presents a prioritized list of needs for research, regulatory activity, and extension education to be able to transition to alternative pest management practices. The plans take a crop phenology and pest-by-pest approach to identifying and assessing the current management practices. The stakeholders involved in the PMSP process also identify and prioritize their pest management research, regulatory, and extension needs.

Commodity organizations are finding crop profiles and PMSPs to be useful in dealing with issues raised by EPA in risk assessments for specific pesticides and in identifying critical pest management issues and prioritizing research efforts for the commodities they represent. The EPA has found crop profiles and PMSPs to be extremely useful in conducting benefits assessments for their occupational and environmental risk assessments. The executive summaries of some

PMSPs are being used to provide information to legislators and other persons who have an interest in agricultural issues. Commodity boards and commissions that have research programs are finding that the identification and prioritization of pest management needs in a PMSP ensures that these research programs address clientele needs. Crop profiles and PMSPs provide a baseline estimate of pest management for a commodity and an opportunity to evaluate pest management goals.

Examples of completed crop profiles and PMSPs can be found at www.pmcenters.org. Instructions for preparing crop profiles and a checklist for organizing a PMSP can also be found at www.pmcenters.org.

Utah Pesticide and Toxic News, Utah State University Extension, February 2002

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (Nptn) Changes Name

The National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN) has changed its name to the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) <http://npic.orst.edu> 800-858-7378. The 800-telephone number remains the same. NPIC will provide the same type and quality of service as was provided in the past. In 2000, NPTN's web site received 500,000 hits. There are approximately 15 full time and 5 part time employees, with additional job opportunities available.

National Pesticide Safety Program Web Site

The National Pesticide Safety Program (PSP) Web Network site is <http://pep.wsu.edu/psp/>. This web sites target clientele are applicators and educators. Applicators can locate their state certification and training contacts, locate the state web sites and contacts for other pesticide information, and find regional or national pesticide meetings. Educators can locate state web sites and contacts for information, can post educational resources, post/locate educator/regulatory meetings, and conduct maintenance of the site by adding resources, editing existing resources, or adding a web site or contact.

Acephate Interim Document Issued

EPA has issued the interim risk management decision documents for the organophosphate (OP) pesticide acephate (Orthene®). Acephate is an insecticide currently registered for use on a variety of field, fruit, and vegetable crops (e.g. cotton, tobacco, cranberry, mint, sod); on ornamental plants both in greenhouses and outdoors (e.g. nonbearing fruit trees, Christmas trees, and cut flowers); on golf courses; and in food-handling establishments, hospitals, hotels and other public areas for pest control. Based on risk assessments conducted on this pesticide, EPA has concluded that acephate does not pose risk concerns in food or drinking water. By eliminating indoor residential uses and all turf uses except golf courses and sod farms, the aggregate risk from acephate fits in its own risk cup. Other risk mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce worker and ecological risks below levels of concern for reregistration. For example, for certain uses, application methods will be eliminated and application rates will be lowered. Labeling to protect honey bees will be required, as will labeling to reduce potential spray drift.

Further mitigation of acephate uses may be necessary to reduce risks from methamidophos (Monitor®) residues that result from acephate applications, since acephate forms methamidophos as a break-down product. Once the methamidophos interim document is complete, the Agency will determine whether the methamidophos exposure resulting from acephate use poses risk concerns. Any potential further mitigation will be discussed at the time the methamidophos document is released. EPA is currently completing the cumulative risk assessment for the OP pesticides and will complete the reregistration decision for acephate after consideration of cumulative risks. The risk assessment and risk management documents for acephate are available at

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/op/acephate.htm> .

Clinically Speaking, University of Florida Extension, March 2002

Treated Grass Clippings

If you compost grass clippings, you may want to avoid the use of clopyralid (Confront) on your lawn. Clopyralid is used to control dandelions, clover, and other broadleaf weeds. Unfortunately, this herbicide can persist at damaging levels in compost. There have been reports of contamination from Washington State, Pennsylvania, and other areas.

Most herbicides break down during the composting process, but herbicides in the pyridine carboxylic group break down very slowly. These herbicides are not considered to be a serious health threat to animals, but tomatoes and some other broadleaves can be affected at less than 10 parts per billion.

If you or your lawn-care company use clopyralid on your lawn, exclude these clippings from your regular compost pile. You could have a separate compost pile that you spread back on the lawn, or you could leave the clippings on the lawn.

Arsenic Wood Preservatives

By December 31, 2003, the wood industry plans to stop selling products that have been treated with arsenic wood preservatives to homeowners. A number of products containing arsenic are used to pressure-treat wood. Pressure-treating makes the wood resistant to insects and decay. Almost all wood used in decks, playgrounds, and other outdoor uses is pressure treated. The EPA is concerned that children may be overexposed to arsenic compounds.

This voluntary decision will affect nearly all residential uses of wood treated with chromated copper arsenate, also known as CCA, including wood used in play-structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios and walkways/boardwalks. By January 2004, EPA will not allow CCA products for any of these residential uses. This decision will facilitate the voluntary transition to new alternative wood preservatives that do not contain arsenic in both the manufacturing and retail sectors.

There are two factors (or more behind this decision) because almost no regulatory decision is completely voluntary.

- 1) There are other effective products available that do not contain arsenic. The new products are more expensive, but cost is less significant to residential buyers.
- 2) Although EPA has not concluded that the older wood products pose any unreasonable risks, people get excited when they hear "arsenic" and "children" in the same sentence.

Public action groups have been campaigning against the arsenic-treated products for several years. The industry is wise to be proactive and move away from the products that contain arsenic.

The Agency does not recommend replacing existing structures that contain wood treated with arsenic preservatives. However, they do offer these tips to reduce the likelihood of exposure to arsenic.

1. Do not burn pressure-treated wood. This tip is particularly important. Fire will break down arsenic.
2. Do not allow food to come in direct contact with pressure-treated wood.
3. Paint pressure-treated wood.
4. Wash hands after handling pressure-treated wood.
5. If you saw or sand pressure-treated wood, avoid breathing dust.
6. Wrap your deck completely with plastic wrap (just kidding on #6).

For more information, visit

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/cca_transition.htm