



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We initiated this review to determine the ability of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) to measure its performance in meeting the mandates of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). We sought to determine the strengths and weaknesses of OPP's current measuring system, how OPP can use existing data to measure, and what impact FQPA had on mitigating dietary pesticide exposure risk on children's health. This is the third in a series of three reports on FQPA.

Background

The goal of EPA's pesticide program is to protect public health and the environment by ensuring pesticides are used safely. FQPA changed the way OPP regulates pesticides and emphasizes protecting children's health.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Liaison at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2006/20060801-2006-P-00028.pdf

To view a supplemental report with additional details, click on:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2006/20060801-2006-P-00028A.pdf

Measuring the Impact of the Food Quality Protection Act: Challenges and Opportunities

What We Found

Although EPA has made progress in implementing the requirements of the FQPA, we found that OPP has primarily measured its success and the impact of FQPA by adherence to its reregistration schedule rather than by reductions in risk to children's health. The measures used by OPP generally indicate actions taken, instead of environmental or human health outcomes achieved. OPP lacks outcome measures to assess the specific impact of those actions on the health of children and others. OPP has recently taken steps to develop outcome measures, but significant challenges remain.

By integrating existing data into a suite of performance measures, OPP can better track the effectiveness of regulatory decisions and program performance. We identified several pools of quantitative data available for use as a suite of performance indicators, but coordination efforts will be needed. OPP can better utilize a number of data and measurement sources, including the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Data Program, to track health-based indicators of children's health risks.

EPA can measure the impact of FQPA on children's health more efficiently through the examination of pesticide exposure data, and changes in usage patterns, substitutions, and import trends. We used the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Data Program data to illustrate dietary risk changes since the passage of FQPA in toxicity risks on the foods commonly consumed by children.

What We Recommend

We recommend that OPP work to move away from primarily using outputs as performance measures, and implement a suite of output and outcome measures to assess the human health and environmental impacts of its work. We also recommend that OPP pursue revision of EPA's goal structure as appropriate, and work with other EPA program offices and other Federal agencies to obtain needed data. EPA generally agreed with the recommendations, and expressed its appreciation for our findings. We made changes where appropriate.