PSEP Quarterly

A quarterly newsletter for pesticide safety education professionals.

Summer 2002

Headline Story

New PPRS Version Released. The newest version of the Performance Planning and Reporting System was released on August 12, 2002. It is available for Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) input at http://www.pprs.info/dataentry. Program Coordinators are asked to view (and revise if needed) their Plans of Work by August 31, 2002 and complete their fiscal year 2002 Annual Report by September 30, 2002.

The most notable change in the system is the new process for updating program contacts. Changes in contact information are to be sent to Bill Hoffman (whoffman@reeusda.gov) or Kathy Kimble-Day (kday@reeusda.gov). This is due to the need for greater standardization among position definitions. The "administrative contact" for the program must be the Extension Director or his/her designee – usually an assistant/associate director (e.g., Agriculture & Natural Resources Leader). There are a few rare cases where the Extension Director will designate a department head to fulfill this role. The "Coordinator" is the person whom the administrative contact designates to head the program at the institution. Extension staff who work directly for PSEP and IPM programs can also be included in our databases so that they may receive PPRS (and other) mailings. The program positions are grouped for database purposes as "administrative contact," "coordinator," "and assistant coordinator."

The system relocated to the National Science Foundation Center for Integrated Pest Management (CIPM) at North Carolina State University from the Information Development Expanding Awareness (IDEA) service (affiliated with Iowa State University). The CIPM provides leadership, software development, and system maintenance for other pest management program information products including:

- Pest Management Centers Web Information System (http://www.pmcenters.org),
- The Cotton Pickin' Web (http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/cottonpickin/)
- Web Development for the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants
- New Pest Management Technologies Database (http://www.pestmanagement.info)

CIPM Director Ron Stinner has done a majority of the project's database and web programming himself. The database has been re-designed for efficiency, and the web interface has been re-designed for easier use.

National Pesticide Safety Education News

Pesticide Review Finds Little Risk. WASHINGTON, DC, June 13, 2002 (ENS) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says its comprehensive review of the cumulative risks of organophosphate pesticides found that all but two of the 30 compounds studied are safe.

The EPA released its revised assessment of organophosphate pesticides, nearing completion of its review of more than a thousand organophosphate pesticide food tolerances -- also known as legal residue limits. The agency said almost all the pesticides are expected to meet the highest, most rigorous federal safety standards.

"Preliminary results from this scientific assessment provide good news for American consumers," said Stephen Johnson, EPA's assistant administrator for the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances.

Results on two chemicals, however, could lead to new restrictions on their use, or even a complete ban. Dichlorvos, or DDVP, used in fly paper and other pest strips, and dimethoate, an agricultural pesticide sprayed on a variety of produce, both were linked to health problems including headaches, nausea, neurological disorders and even death.

"If it turns out that our concerns are valid, we will need to take action," said Johnson. "Banning them certainly is one of the options."

The review of organophosphates was ordered as part of a legal settlement with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Release of the results was delayed three times by legal action by the pesticide industry. The most recent appeal by the industry was denied, and the EPA released the report later the same day.

In the past several years, EPA has taken a variety of regulatory actions on the organophosphates pesticides, ranging from lowering application rates to complete cancellation of specific uses, to help meet the requirements of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996.

The agency says these actions have reduced the risks of pesticide use. The EPA is still working to evaluate certain food and residential uses of individual organophosphates, including DDVP and dimethoate.
The NRDC said the EPA review still failed to account for all pesticide threats to children. The EPA said its review considered pesticide use and exposure in food, drinking water and residential spraying, and accounted for variability in potential exposures based on age, seasonal and geographic factors.

The current assessment "includes consideration of the FQPA safety factor for protecting sensitive populations, including infants and children," the EPA said.

Last week, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine's Center for Children's Health and the Environment began running a series of ads in the New York Times warning of the health effects that toxic chemicals, including pesticides, can have on children. The ads charge that exposure to pesticides can alter the reproductive systems of wildlife and humans, cause learning disabilities and increase the risk of certain cancers.

At a press briefing on Tuesday, Philip Landrigan, director of the Center for Children's Health and the Environment, said the United States has "not done a good job of testing [new] chemicals to determine if they cause toxic effects in children."

"I don't think the public understands the broad, pervasive impact that chemicals have on children's health," Landrigan added.

More information on the EPA's pesticide review is available at: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/cumulative

More information on the NRDC's campaign against toxic pesticides is available at: http://www.nrdc.org/health/pesticides/default.asp.

National Poison Control Center Number. There is now one single telephone number for poison emergencies. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, 1-800-222-1222 is the telephone number for every poison center in the United States. This number can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to talk to a poison expert. Calls will be accepted for poison emergencies and general questions about a particular poison or about poison prevention.

The Association stresses that there is still a network of 65 poison centers around the country. When the nationwide number is called, the caller will be automatically routed to their local poison center. Local poison control telephone numbers will continue to function.

CSREES Administrator's Report to the Partnership -- Summer 2002. Colien Hefferan, CSREES Administrator, recently provided copies of her Summer 2002 Report to the Partnership at the Joint Committee on Organization and Policy/Administrative Heads Section Meeting, and the Board on Agriculture Assembly, Policy Board of Directors Meeting, July 21-24, in Salt Lake City, UT.
The Report discusses the new Farm Bill, "Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002," signed by President Bush on May 13, 2002, and the implementation activities of the Agency. Updates from CSREES Program areas are also included, highlighting such programs as the 4-H Centennial Promotion, the upcoming CSREES Stakeholder Workshop and the National Small Farm Conference, New Healthier U.S. and e-Extension Initiatives, CSREES Partners with Montana State to Produce Housing Materials for Native Americans, Streamlining Federal Grants Programs, Maintaining Land-Grant University Laboratory Security, and the Nation's Rapid Response Plant and Animal Disease Diagnostic Network, to name a few.
The complete notice can be viewed at: http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/whatnew/02/ReportToPartner-F.pdf.

PR Notice Comment Period Extended. In response to a request from stakeholders, the EPA is extending the comment period for the draft pesticide registration notice titled: "False or Misleading Pesticide Product Brand Names." The notice was first published in the Federal Register on March 28, 2002. The comment period will now be open until October 30, 2002.

PR notices are issued by the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) to inform pesticide registrants and other interested persons about important policies, procedures, and registration related decisions, and serve to provide guidance to pesticide registrants and OPP personnel. The draft PR notice provides guidance to registrants, applicants, and the public as to what product brand names may be false or misleading, either by themselves or in association with company names or trademarks. This PR notice can be viewed at:
http://www.epa.gov/opppmsd1/PR_Notices/pr2002-x.htm.

North Central Pest Management Center Produces National West Nile Virus Information. The North Central Pest Management Center has produced a web site that compiles West Nile Virus information from around the nation. The site, http://www.ncpmc.org/NewsAlerts/westnilevirus.html, contains links to state extension products pertaining to the Virus and a national WNV fact sheet prepared by Sue Ratcliffe, the North Central Region IPM Facilitator.

Fourth National IPM Symposium Planned. A national integrated pest management (IPM) symposium is planned for April 8-10, 2003, in Indianapolis. The theme will be "Building Alliances for the Future of IPM," and topics addressed will include biological control, risk assessment, invasive species, the building of alliances, urban IPM (landscapes, schools, homes), international IPM, new technologies, IPM for vertebrate pests, communicating and marketing IPM, and the transition to ecologically based IPM. Details are on the web at http://nautilus.outreach.uiuc.edu/conted/conference.asp?ID=244.

State PSEP Highlights from Around the Nation & the World Wide Web

Ohio State – New Spanish Speaking Publication. A new publication titled "Spanish for Greenhouse Supervisors" is available from The Ohio State University Extension. The bulletin covers common words/phrases used in floriculture in Spanish and English -- including safety. It is accompanied with a CD-ROM where the phrases are pronounced in English and Spanish. The author is Dr. Claudio Pasian, who is a state extension specialist in the horticulture and crop science department. Dr. Pasian is a native speaker of Spanish and put this together as a service to his clientele.

To order, please contact the media distribution office at pubs@ag.osu.edu or by phone (614-292-1248) and request Bulletin 900. The cost is $5, which includes the CD.

Rutgers – New Respiratory Protection Publications. The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Pest Management Office has just finalized a section on pesticide respiratory protection for incorporation into the upcoming National Pesticide Applicator Training Manual. The office has pre-released this section for use by pesticide educators and applicators. It can be obtained at the fact sheet page of the Rutgers Pesticide Applicator Training Program web site: http://www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/PAT/factsheets.htm.

Florida Makes Public Health Manual Available. David Dame and Thomas Fasulo, of the University of Florida, have produced the publication: Public Health Pesticide Applicator Training Manual. Copies of the manual will be offered for sale through the UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore. Discounts will be offered to quantity buyers (25%) and resellers (40%). The cost of the manual will be $25. A CD-ROM copy was sent to pesticide coordinators listed on the CSREES web site.

Tennessee – Web site Intro is a "Must See." The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service Pesticide Applicator Training Program web site has an attention-getting introduction. It can be viewed at: http://eppserver.ag.utk.edu/pat/pat.htm.

Montana State – Crop Life Articles Regarding Biotech Crop Impact Survey & Canadian Pesticide Imports. The Montana State University Pesticide Education Program's July 26 newsletter "PAT CHAT" contains interesting articles regarding:

1) A recent survey of biotech crops conducted by the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, and
2) Recent testimony by Croplife America President Jay Vroom to the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Production and Price Competitiveness.

The articles can be viewed at: http://scarab.msu.montana.edu/Extension/PAT_CHAT/7_26_02.htm#BIOTECH.

Washington State – February 2003 Pacific Northwest (PNW) Conference Tentative Agenda Available. The Washington State University Pesticide Education Program has posted the tentative agenda for the PNW Pesticide Issues Conference that will be held in Yakima, Washington, on February 26, 2003. Agenda items include cholinesterase monitoring, spray drift, and agricultural employee health and pesticide exposure issues. The agenda can be viewed at: http://pep.wsu.edu/Education/issues.html.

Florida & North Carolina State– Pesticide Safety Education Programs Get New Address. The University of Florida's Pesticide Information Office has re-located its web site to: http://pested.ifas.ufl.edu. The Pesticide Safety Education Program at North Carolina State has moved its web site to: http://ipm.ncsu.edu/pesticidesafety.

Special Section

EPA "Sets the Record Straight." The following article was distributed via EPA's Pesticide Programs List Serve on August 7, 2002. The original announcement referenced in the article follows.

Setting the Record Straight on Pesticide Tolerance Evaluations. On Friday, Aug. 2, EPA announced that it had met a significant milestone for food safety by reassessing more than 6,400 allowable pesticide residues on food (called tolerances) to ensure that they satisfy the tougher food safety standard contained in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. Reaching this goal was accomplished through an exhaustive scientific and regulatory effort involving key stakeholders throughout the process.

Unfortunately, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), who has worked closely with EPA on this issue, has recently disseminated misinformation rather than facts. EPA would like to set the record straight.

1.) NRDC is alleging that the Agency has falsely claimed to have met the statutory deadline for pesticide tolerance reassessment.

EPA has indeed met the Congressionally mandated deadlines in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 to reassess two-thirds of the existing pesticide tolerances on food to ensure they meet the tougher health standards required by law. This has been accomplished through a multi-year process that has included numerous rounds of scientific and public review.

2.) In an especially inappropriate and inaccurate charge, NRDC characterized EPA's approach to tolerance reassessment as involving "Enron-like accounting."

This kind of blatantly charged language is wholly without merit and profoundly unfair to the dedicated EPA staff and the many stakeholders who have invested valuable time and energy into making tolerance reassessment a success. EPA stands by the integrity of this program. The methods used to determine when a tolerance has completed the reassessment process are accurate, time-tested and open for full scrutiny throughout.

3.) NRDC claims that the Agency has failed to review the high priority pesticides.

Since 1996, the Agency has worked under a systematic approach that prioritizes for reassessment and risk mitigation specific pesticides that may pose the greatest risks to public health. In a consent agreement signed in 2001, NRDC agreed with EPA to an aggressive schedule to reassess certain pesticides of particular concern. To date, EPA has successfully met all the deadlines for expeditious review of the priority pesticides in that agreement, and the Agency is on track to meet the remaining deadlines for the additional pesticides. In addition, EPA prioritized the evaluation of pesticide uses that involve children's food and has completed the reassessment for approximately two-thirds of those tolerances. These actions reflect the true record, focusing on the potentially riskiest pesticides first. This represents a major accomplishment for food safety, and one for which the public should be assured that the US continues to have among the safest food supplies in the world.

Another major advance in pesticide regulation was met in December 2001, when EPA released a preliminary cumulative risk assessment for the organophosphates, a monumental scientific and regulatory accomplishment. After additional public and scientific review, the Agency issued a revised cumulative risk assessment in June, ahead of schedule. The issuance of these documents meets our legal obligations under the NRDC consent decree for issuing a preliminary and revised cumulative risk assessment for the organophosphate pesticides. EPA will continue to expeditiously evaluate the remaining organophosphates and other high priority pesticides. The Agency will continue the important work to ensure all pesticides meet the tough scientific and regulatory standards in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996.

4.) NRDC even goes so far as to assert that by releasing the press statement on Friday afternoon, the Agency is somehow avoiding public scrutiny.

Quite the contrary, the Agency had been working diligently to meet the statutory deadline of Aug. 3. Our announcement reflected the completion of three years of work and was released on Friday because the deadline fell on a Saturday. EPA is very proud of the concerted efforts to accomplish this task.
In conclusion, EPA, along with the public, industry, growers, consumer groups, states, the public health community and others, have all worked diligently to implement FQPA using a transparent, open process, with sound scientific principles, while meeting statutory deadlines with integrity. As always, EPA's primary focus and unwavering commitment continues to be the protection of public health and the environment for the American people.

EPA Meets Pesticide Tolerance Reassessment Goal. EPA has met a significant milestone in a multi-year regulatory process to reassess existing levels for allowable pesticide residues on food (called "tolerances"). Today marks the successful completion of the second phase of an intensive 10-year scientific and regulatory effort to ensure that all existing pesticide tolerances meet the tougher food safety standard called for in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. That law required EPA to complete the comprehensive safety evaluation of over 66 percent of existing pesticide tolerances by Aug. 3.

"The rigorous scientific and public processes followed by EPA during this tolerance reassessment continues to strengthen our confidence in the overall safety of the nation's food supply and underscores the benefits of eating a varied diet rich in fruits and vegetables," said Stephen L. Johnson, EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances. "This accomplishment represents a great deal of work, not only by EPA staff but also significant contributions from many scientific experts, various stakeholders and the public."

In accordance with deadlines set in the law, EPA has reassessed more than 6,400 tolerances for pesticide residues on food (tolerances are the maximum amount of a pesticide allowed to remain in or on a food commodity that has been treated with that pesticide). In conducting the safety evaluation, EPA prioritized the reassessment and risk mitigation specific pesticide classes which may pose the greatest risk, including the organophosphate, carbamate, organochlorine classes, as well as pesticides that show evidence of carcinogenicity. Depending on the specific class, EPA has completed tolerance reassessment for half and up to three-quarters of the individual pesticides in each of these various classes. Tolerance reassessment has also included numerous other individual pesticides that are not part of these specific classes. Additionally, the Agency has reassessed almost two-thirds of the tolerances for foods commonly eaten by children. As part of the reassessment process, EPA has revoked more than 1,900 tolerances.

Throughout this process, EPA has sought extensive public involvement, including releasing risk assessments for comment, presenting technical briefings on risk assessments, inviting public comment on risk management options and seeking public comment on the science policies used by the Agency in its decision making. EPA convened advisory committees to ensure transparency in the decision process and increased its consultation with stakeholders. EPA developed methods for conducting effective assessments of combined (or "aggregate") exposures from food, water and residential sources of exposure, which provide a more complete picture of risk than had previously been possible. The Agency also developed methods for assessing the cumulative risk of multiple pesticides that have a common mechanism of toxicity. Together, these steps have significantly strengthened the scientific foundation and public participation supporting the US pesticide regulatory program.

In addition to meeting the tolerance reassessment goal on July 31, EPA completed the evaluation of four individual pesticides, in compliance with a consent agreement with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). These pesticides are: benomyl, diazinon, endosulfan and lindane.
Additional information on tolerance reassessment is available on EPA's web site: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/tolerance/ . Information on chemicals undergoing EPA's pesticide re-registration process is available at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/status.htm .