PMNs claimed to be confidential will be transferred within five days, the notice said.

Under the terms of its contract, Walk may not reveal to anyone outside the organization the fact that EPA requested a review of a PMN submission. The contractor also must safeguard from unauthorized disclosure the PMN and any information generated during its review.

Industry Structure

EPA said it selected Springborn Laboratories, Inc., Enfield, Conn., to assist in identifying industry structure, issues and problems within the markets associated with the PMNs and possible substitutes for a PMN substance (45 FR 50420).

The agency said it will need to disclose confidential business information to Springborn, but added that any prepared reports that include this information will be treated as confidential. EPA said information submitted to Springborn could include chemical identity, product formulation and company identity, as well as end use and PMN property information.

Pesticides

EPA PUBLISHES TOLERANCES, PERMITS, RECEIVES NOTICES OF CRISIS EXEMPTIONS

The Environmental Protection Agency July 25-30 received four pesticide petitions, acted on [illegible] petitions, and received three notices of crisis exemptions.

Tolerance Amendments

The agency July 30 established a tolerance for residues of oxamyl on bell peppers at three parts per million (45 FR 50568).

For further information contact Jay Ellenberger, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs, EPA, 401 M St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

On July 25 EPA proposed to set maximum levels of pendimethalin on potatoes and sorghum fodder, forage, and grain at 0.1 ppm (45 FR [illegible]600).

Comments may be sent by August 25 to Robert J. Taylor at the above address.

Temporary Tolerances

The agency renewed a temporary tolerance for the herbicide oryzalin on wheat at 0.1 ppm. The new expiration date is July 9, 1981.

Tolerance Petitions

Shell Chemical Company petitioned the agency to set tolerances for cyano (3-phenoxyphenyl)methyl-4-chloroalpha-(methylethyl)benzeneacetate on apples and lettuce at two ppm; tomatoes at 1 ppm, meat and fat of cattle, goats, hogs, horses, sheep, and in milk at 1 ppm; and the meat byproducts of cattle, goats, hogs, horses, and sheep at 0.5 ppm.

A petition also was submitted by American Cyanamid Company proposing that maximum levels of pendimethalin on sunflower seeds be set at 0.01 ppm.

Experimental Use Permits

Permits to use pesticides in experiments were issued by the agency to:

▸ DMB Packing Corporation, for 3,[illegible]0 pounds of isobutyric acid on grapes to increase yield.

▸ Forest Service, for 0.5 pound of polyhedral inclusion bodies of *N. sertifer* nucleopolyhedrosis virus to evaluate control of European pine sawflies.

▸ Dow Chemical Company, for 150 pounds of chlorpyrifos on cotton to evaluate control of bollworms and bollweevils.

▸ Chevron Chemical Company, for 75.2 pounds of acephate on rangeland to evaluate control of grasshoppers.

▸ U.S. Soil, Inc., for a mixture of 1,500 pounds of methyl alphaeleostearate [methyl ester of (E,E,E,)-9,1[illegible]13-octadecatrienoic acid] and xylene on cotton to evaluate control of bollweevils.

Registration

The agency announced the receipt of an application from American Cyanamid Company to register AMDRO-20 Insecticide containing tetrahydro-5, 5-dimethyl-2(1H)-pyrimidinone (3- [4-(trifluoromethyl) phenyl] -1-2- [4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl] ethenyl-2-propenylidine) hydrazone 0.88%. The application proposed to classify the product for use in fire ant control.

American Cyanamid also submitted an application to register AMDRO Fire Ant Insecticide containing the active ingredient tetrahydro-5,5-dimethyl-2(1H)-pyrimidinone 3-(4-(trifluoromethyl) phenyl]-1-2-[4- (trifluoromethyl)-phenyl] ethenyl)-2-propenylidene) hydrazone 0.88%.

Crisis Exemptions

EPA announced that notices of crisis exemptions for the use of pesticides in emergencies were received from:

▸ California, for the use of diazinon on citrus pulp to control vinegar flies.

▸ Delaware, for the use of azinphosmethyl to control carrot weevils on carrots.

▸ New Jersey, for the use of azinphosmethyl to control carrot weevils on parsley.

Specific Exemptions

Specific exemptions were granted by the agency to the following applicants:

▸ Arkansas, for the use of thiobencarb alone and a tank mixture of Machete and propanil to control weeds in rice fields.

▸ Florida, for the use of ethylene dibromide to control soybean cyst, southern root-knot, peanut root-knot, reniform, and stinging nematodes on soybeans.

▸ Idaho, for the use of acephate to control black vine and strawberry root weevils on hops.

▸ Maryland, for the use of fenvalerate to control the Colorado potato beetle on potatoes.

Health Hazards

BENZENE, ASBESTOS, PCB EXPOSURE PROBLEMS REVIEWED AT HEALTH ASSOCIATION MEETING

MILWAUKEE — (By a BNA special correspondent) — The Supreme Court should not be blamed for refusing to lower the benzene standard, because occupational medicine "simply foisted its own statistical uncertainties on the courts," Dr. Irving Selikoff told environmental health professionals July 28.

"The court was grappling with the same insecurities we are," the physician from New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital said. "If we were dealing with absolute certainty, the case would never have gotten to the Supreme Court."

At the same time, Selikoff declared the numerical standards required by the Supreme Court "cannot be acquired" at the present time, and will never be acquired unless industry provides worker exposure data to occupational health researchers. "We simply will never determine carcinogenicity without data which only industry has," he said.

Addressing the National Environmental Health Association's educational conference, Selikoff said he does not believe there is such a thing as a total or absolute

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threshold level for exposure to cancer-causing agents, but there are certainly practical thresholds.

How much residual risk we accept for others depends on ethics and morality," he said. When asked about cost-benefit analysis being applied to occupational exposure levels, he said the "costs should accrue to the same person who will enjoy the benefits," and "a worker should not have to put his life on the line."

Asbestos Exposure

In reviewing his research on asbestos exposure, Selikoff noted that there never will be developed any valid dose-response relationships for low level exposure and family-contact disease, because "nobody does dust counts on shaking out father's clothes after work, or even on such groups as ship repair workers. The data is not there," he said.

Selikoff reported the results of a soon-to-be-published study of 282 ship repair workers done by Mt. Sinai Hospital, which showed that thirty years after presumably low-level exposure to asbestos, approximately 85 percent have abnormal chest x-rays. He noted that if mesothelioma were not such a rare disease in the general population, its connection with asbestos would probably never have been noticed.

There is also a great dearth of data on possible reversal of risk for occupationally exposed workers, he said. It is possible that, by removing workers from benzene exposure when certain benign blood changes occur, their risk of leukemia is lessened in the same way that quitting smoking eventually reverses lung cancer risk, he said, but added this is an almost unexplored field.

Benzene Decision

Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr., director of health standards programs for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, told the conference, "It would be a mistake to conclude that the Supreme Court's decision in the benzene case put OSHA on 'hold' or in fact completely destroyed the OSHA standard-setting process and related efforts to protect the American workforce."

He said, however, the decision may result in a slowdown in the promulgation of standards, since a considerable portion of the agency's resources will have to be diverted to meet the Court's expectations.

Walker noted that the decision is simply another impediment in the already "difficult, slow, and contentious" process of standard-setting. In addition, he said "the court did not reject the secretary's conclusion that there is no known safe level of exposure to a carcinogen, that benzene causes leukemia, or that benefits may be derived from reducing exposure to benzene." "The Court did indicate that those conclusions standing alone may not be adequate to support regulation," he said.

Walker called for additional public health professionals to aid in the enormous data-gathering required, and for full acceptance of environmental health personnel in the community health profession. Full acceptance is essential, he said, because "90 to 99 percent of the illnesses recognized and dealt with by private and public health services are environmentally or occupationally related."

Risk Assessment

Connecticut Department of Health official Anthony Sardinas told the group on July 29 that environmental health professionals should get out of the business of giving the public advice and get back into the business of gathering and evaluating data.

"All the courts are interested in, and all we should be interested in, is what happens to people as a result of the use of carcinogens we live in," Sardinas declared.

In spite of millions of dollars spent on eliminating PCBs from food and other contaminating sources and considerable public confusion, Sardinas said there is no conclusive data showing that PCBs are indeed carcinogenic. Similarly, he said, a study his department has just completed of its handling of complaints about the installation of urea-formaldehyde foam insulation has shown that the state program has been completely ineffective in diminishing either the rate at which problems occur, or their severity. His findings also indicate that health effects from the installation linger for an average of 2.3 years after, he said, and hypersensitivity to formaldehyde may last for much longer.

Society would be able to evaluate risk and prioritize its goals more efficiently if epidemiology concentrated on its basic function — that of data management, according to Sardinas. Epidemiology should be capable of integrating complex data from all fields into a risk assessment schedule, he said. Since the resources allotted to public and occupational health are severely limited, priorities must be assigned on the basis of data available.

Data on the long-term effects of chemicals need not be expensive to gather, he maintained. Connecticut is currently undertaking a study of blood by-products, particularly triglyceride by-products from samples drawn from local fisherman who habitually eat fish from the state's rivers, and therefore ingest low levels of PCBs. Sardinas said he expects the results to be released early next year. "It should help us determine what the risks are of eating five to 10 fish a week which are contaminated with PCBs," he said.

Such studies are neither expensive, nor hard to perform, he insisted, and they offer an excellent opportunity for local and county health departments to become involved in the research effort. The role of local municipalities in environmental health efforts is often unclear, Sardinas said, when in fact they are often the ideal source for the long-term data that is needed.

FDA's Role

The issues raised by last year's PCB contamination of animal and poultry feed in a Billings Mont., mill have not been resolved, although the Food and Drug Administration and other agencies have made some procedural changes, according to Dr. Sanford Miller, director of FDA's Bureau of Foods. Although the contamination was discovered during a routine safety inspection, the fact that the annual inspection occurred during the contamination episode was "just plain luck," Miller said. The issues have not been resolved because of the limited resources and uncertain effects involved, he added.

The clean-up effort has stimulated a more efficient interagency communication system, greater cooperation between the FDA, Environmental Protection Agency, and USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service, and a greater awareness of the hazards of PCBs in general, he said. The agencies involved are seeking to remove electrical equipment containing PCBs from food handling, servicing and packing areas, to prevent further accidents, he said, but political and economic pressures have made this a difficult and slow process.

Chiefly, the episode has resulted in a reexamination of FDA's responsibility in matters "affecting the public health," Miller said. "We recognize that we are no longer concerned solely with the quantity of life affected, but also with its quality," he said.