

The FDA official added that his agency intends to follow this enforcement approach until EPA promulgates a new tolerance regulation for alachlor residues or makes some other regulatory decision regarding the pesticide.

## ● DOWNGRADING OF CODEX COMMODITY COMMITTEES RECOMMENDED

The Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program has recommended delegating greater responsibility to the Codex Alimentarius Commission's general committees and lessening the role of Codex commodity committees in areas such as contaminants, methods of analysis, sampling and product certification.

In a paper prepared for the FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade, to be held in Rome in March, the Secretariat said the conference may also want to review Codex acceptance procedures "so as to bring these procedures into conformity with true government practices and reflect the situation in the international food trade."

Noting that there have been recent far-reaching proposals to review existing Codex standards so as to emphasize only those aspects responsible for rejection of shipments at borders, the Secretariat stated that such a move would "present the risk of rendering obsolete to a large extent many existing standards (and) would require careful review to determine which aspects of the standards would need to be maintained or transferred to general standards" and which "would need to be maintained in the interest of harmonizing specific quality requirements for individual products."

Codex standards "should reflect the regulatory practices in the majority of member countries, bearing in mind that regulatory practices change over the years in response to a variety of external factors," the Secretariat declared, adding, "The conference may wish to recommend that the CAC review carefully its criteria for the establishment of work priorities."

## ● EPA-er JENKINS RENEWS DIOXIN STUDY FRAUD CHARGES

Renewing charges that Monsanto didn't count some dioxin victims in its epidemiology studies of dioxin, EPA's Cate Jenkins wrote Jan. 24 to the agency's Office of Criminal Investigations (OCI) to list the impacts the studies may have had on EPA's regulatory program (See March 7, Pages 2 and 26; Nov. 28, Page 12, and Dec. 5, Page 23).

She also said the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found no reason to exclude cases of soft tissue sarcoma although Monsanto had (See Jan. 23, Page 46). Noting that EPA classifies dioxin as a B2 carcinogen (animal evidence only), Jenkins said the agency relied primarily on the Monsanto studies for the classification.

Because of that classification, she said, dioxins would not be listed as priority pollutants under the new Clean Air Act and have not been regulated under current air emissions standards.

Superfund's Reportable Quantities (RQs) vary by a factor of 10 according to whether the substance is deemed a Group A, B1, B2 or C carcinogen, she said, but continued:

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"Although dioxins are currently considered to be potent carcinogens, and consequently their RQ is the same as for a Group A carcinogen, there (are) heavy pressure and active programs at EPA to downgrade the potency estimate."

She said no 'Maximum Contaminant Level Goals' have been developed in EPA's drinking water program "because of the false belief that dioxins will never be found in drinking water." Jenkins also objected that RCRA's Toxicity Characteristic (TC) program, although it offers equal protection for Group A, B and C carcinogens, is only protective at the one in 100,000 level.

EPA's cancer classification for dioxin also has denied veterans benefits from the Veterans Administration (VA), Jenkins said, "because VA requires a statistically significant finding of these effects in human, not animal, studies." Australia and New Zealand also have refused veterans benefits based on the Monsanto studies, she said, and:

"The White House itself recognized what the impact would be on private litigation of classifying dioxins as human carcinogens. A White House memorandum coerced the Centers for Disease Control not to find cancer and other health effects in our Vietnam veterans, since this would have a profound effect on litigation by private citizens around Superfund sites, where even higher exposure to dioxins was probable."

Jenkins said her latest memo was prompted by the statement from the agency's OCI that for a criminal conviction it would be necessary to establish not only fraud, but the "impact of this fraud on the regulatory process."

### ATRAZINE PERSISTENT IN SOIL SUBSURFACE, HYDROLOGISTS FIND

Atrazine is more persistent in the subsurface than in surface soils, research hydrologists told an American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco Dec. 5-6.

As reported by EPA's Elizabeth Behl in a memo circulated by the Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances, researchers at Kerr Lab in Ada, Okla., found little or no adsorption or degradation of atrazine at a depth of 11 meters. The study also found that atrazine concentrations decreased less rapidly in sterile soils, biodegradation was affected by sediment type (perhaps due to lower organic matter content), and atrazine did not mineralize.

Other research findings reported by Behl involved cyanazine, alachlor and triazine herbicides. A study of herbicides in surface waters of the Midwest by D.A. Goolsby, of the U.S. Geological Survey's Denver office, found concentrations of herbicides surging in the post-application period from a median concentration. Herbicides were found year-round in surface water samples from the Midwest, the study reported; samples showed a 10-fold increase in concentrations following runoff events. Researchers noted that concentrations of alachlor and atrazine may exceed MCLs for several weeks to months following applications.

In a study led by G.N. Delin, USGS St. Paul, researchers found that changes in nitrate concentration correlated well with cropping systems employed. However, concentrations of atrazine did not. In addition, atrazine was found to be "quite persistent" in the unsaturated zone, they said.

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