

REPRINTED FROM
PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT AND INSECTICIDE
RESISTANCE

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ACADEMIC PRESS, INC.
NEW YORK SAN FRANCISCO LONDON

Coordination in the US Federal Government on Pests, Pesticides, and Pest Management

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Coordination among federal agencies in research on pests and pesticides, and in the control of pests, using pesticides and other techniques of pest management, has existed through various formalized federal interdepartmental groups since 1940.

The first of these, the Interdepartmental Committee on Pest Control (ICPC) was established in 1940 following a letter sent from the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture to the Departments of the Interior, the Army, and the Navy, and the US Public Health Service. S. A. Rohwer, Assistant Chief, Bureau of Entomology and Quarantine, US Department of Agriculture, was elected the first chairman, and the chairmanship then rotated among the participating federal departments. Other federal agencies were invited to designate liaison representatives to attend meetings when matters of interest to them were being considered. The stated goals and objectives of this first interdepartmental group were to consider requirements for research and development; to serve as a consultative body, when requested, for federal agencies and for the manufacturers of pesticides and dispersal equipment; to coordinate programs on pest control to the maximum extent possible for prevention of arthropod-borne diseases and the control of pests that destroy property; and to emphasize the importance of safe and effective uses of pesticides. The ICPC met at the call of the chairman and at least three

formal meetings were held each year.

The ICPC proved to be a very valuable avenue for providing better cooperation between federal departments having a mutual interest and responsibility for control of harmful and obnoxious pests. This breaking of ground for more effective cooperation in the pest control field paved the way for other inter-, and intradepartmental committees and boards to be organized for more effective prosecution of pest control research and operations. Some of these committees achieved notable success, such as the Army Surgeon General's Committee on Chemotherapeutics and Other Agents, Subcommittee on Tropical Disease which, together with the Committee on Medical Research of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, and the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine of the US Department of Agriculture, guided the screening and testing of repellents and insecticides.

In August of 1942, the National Research Council formed a conference group on insecticides and insect repellents under their Division of Medical Sciences to coordinate the activities of the many groups participating in programs of testing and developing new repellent compounds and insecticides, including DDT. In February of 1944, the Army Surgeon General formed a DDT Committee, consisting of representatives of all interested agencies, to work with the War Projection Board in dealing with special problems in the development, production, and procurement of DDT. This latter committee was supplanted by the Army Committee for Insect and Rodent Control (ACIRC) with liaison representation from the Office of Scientific Research and Development, Departments of Agriculture and Navy, and the Public Health Service. The Office of Scientific Research and Development was disestablished at the end of World War II; the ACIRC, however, continued until it became the Armed Forces Pest Control Board (AFPCB) in 1957, over ten years later.

A resurgence of activity of the ICPC followed abolition of the Office of Scientific Research and Development to assure an exchange of information on research and control. Another group of agencies, concerned only with control of disease vectors, the US Public Health Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the US Department of Agriculture's Laboratory at Orlando, Florida, which had screened repellents for the armed forces and participated in the development and use of DDT, began annual planning meetings to review their own plans for the coming year to minimize duplication, to ascertain gaps in research and control, and to provide broader coverage, these three groups, the ICPC, the ACIRC/AFPCB, and the Disease Vector Review Committee supplemented each other's efforts.

In 1961, because of presidential concern for interagency

cooperation in the use of pesticides, the Federal Pest Control Review Board (FPCRB) was established. It effectively replaced the ICPC and other interdepartmental review groups, and its membership came from the Departments of Agriculture; the Interior; Defense; and Health, Education and Welfare. The Board placed more emphasis on the review of federal programs of pest control and would adjudicate federal uses of pesticides.

The President's Science Advisory Committee in its May 1963 report on "Use of Pesticides" declared the then existing federal advisory and coordinating mechanisms "inadequate" for providing clear responsibility for control of pesticide use. In direct response a charter was developed and signed by departmental secretaries, with approval from the Bureau of the Budget, to form a new Federal Committee on Pest Control (FCPC). Robert J. Anderson of the Public Health Service was the first chairman and announcement of the FCPC was made by the Presidential Science Advisor, Donald F. Horning. The FCPC was given the mandate "to review plans for and maintain review of pest control programs in which there is active participation on the part of the federal government in planning and developing procedures and some degree of responsibility for supervision or funding" and "advise the appropriate department of its evaluation in each instance so that suitable action may be taken." The difference between the FCPC and the FPCRB was that the new FCPC could address itself to any aspect of pest control that touched upon any federal responsibility. Within a year subcommittees on research, public information, and monitoring were formed, and subsequently subcommittees on program review and safety.

Environmental concerns became more pressing, the Office of Management and Budget felt that the problems of the environment justified a cabinet level committee. The President thereupon established a Cabinet Committee on the Environment, in 1969. A White House announcement on November 20, 1969, detailed a subcommittee on pesticides, with a "Working Group" to assist those cabinet officers who formed the subcommittee on pesticides. The "Working Group's" charter was published on March 26, 1970 (35FR5133). George L. Hutton of the Department of Defense was designated chairman with T. C. Byerly of the Department of Agriculture as vice-chairman. The Working Group took over the functions of the FCPC and immediately established "Panels" from the FCPC subcommittees on research, monitoring, program review, safety, and information. The Working Group's membership was extended to the original four departments with prime interest in pest control, USDA, USDI, USDHEW and USDOD, and the US Departments of State and Transportation. The working group was given an expanded

charter which provided authority in federal international areas and empowered the Working Group specifically to review closely proposed federal programs concerning pests, pesticides and pest control. The Working Group had authority to object to programs as well as recommend alternative measures, changes in programs or suggestions for improvement. Direct White House recognition in times of great environmental concern gave assurance that the Working Group's recommendations would receive careful consideration by the entire federal establishment.

When Executive Plan III became effective in 1970, the Cabinet Committee on the Environment was dissolved. By White House Memo to the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, the Working Group was made responsible to the Council. Revision of the Working Group's charter and reorganization of some of its functions was published in the Federal Register on December 14, 1971 (36FR23741). The Working Group at this time became the Federal Working Group on Pest Management (FWGPM). The charter had again been broadened to encompass training programs for pest control by federal agencies. The Department of Commerce and the US Environmental Protection Agency, and subsequently the Department of Labor, were now departmental members with concerns in pest management included in the FWGPM's membership. Fred H. Tschirley of the Department of Agriculture was elected chairman, and James V. Smith of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, vice chairman.

The FWGPM now continues as the primary staff level coordinating mechanism for federal activities concerning pests, pesticides, and pest management. It specifically reviews and coordinates proposed pest control programs of federal agencies in various parts of the world in which there is active participation on the part of the federal government, either in funding or in supervision; coordinates research for pests and their control and effects of management procedures, whether by chemical or other method; coordinates monitoring of the environment for pesticides and their residues; makes surveys or special investigations of problems; coordinates public information on pest management and the use of pesticides; evaluates economic and social values and risks involved in the control or noncontrol of pests by various methods; develops and coordinates safety measures in the use and disposal of pesticides; and coordinates training programs that will result in an adequate level of competence by federal employees in utilizing and prescribing various control techniques. Whenever the FWGPM feels the public interest will be served by the initiation of new activity, it recommends appropriate action to the Council on Environmental Quality and to the concerned agencies and states.

In addition to numerous opinions, recommendations, and reports given to the Secretaries of federal departments, the Working Group has published several notable documents. Among these, the following are outlined.

- (1) Summary of Interim Guidelines for Disposal of Surplus or Waste Pesticides and Pesticide Containers, December 1970.
- (2) Proceedings of the National Conference on Protective Clothing and Safety Equipment for Pesticide Workers, June, 1972.
- (3) Report of the Task Group on Categorization of Pesticides Used by the Federal Government, September, 1971, Dr. Emil Mrak, Chairman.
- (4) Report of the Task Group on Training Objectives and Standards, September, 1972. Dr. John V. Osmun, Chairman.
- (5) Proceedings of the National Conference on Pesticide Containers, December, 1972.
- (6) Report of the Task Group on Occupational Exposure to Pesticides, January, 1973. Dr. Thomas H. Milby, Chairman.
- (7) Factors to be Considered: Impact of Pest Management on the Environment, March, 1974.
- (8) Guidelines on Sampling and Statistical Methodologies for Ambient Pesticide Monitoring, October, 1974.
- (9) Government Agency Plan for Certification of Federal Employees as Applicators of Restricted Use Pesticides, December, 1974.
- (10) Catalog of Federal Pesticide Monitoring Activities in effect July 1973, March, 1975.
- (11) Guidelines on Analytical Methodology for Pesticide Residue Monitoring, June, 1975.

Presently under preparation are the proceedings of two conferences held in 1975, Workshop on Ways to Increase the Efficiency and Minimize the Hazard of Pesticides through Formulation and Application, and Federal Research: Health Effects of Pesticides. A Study of Federally Financed Research on Pests, Pesticides and Pest Control, originally published by the FCPC in 1968, is presently being updated to form a new publication current to 1976.

The Federal Working Group on Pest Management also sponsors the Pesticides Monitoring Journal, a quarterly published as a source of information on pesticide levels relative to man and his environment.

The author is greatly indebted to Col. W. Doyle Reed, U.S. Army, Retired, and to Dr. W. M. Upholt of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and formerly executive secretary of the Federal Committee on Pest Control, for their recollections and counsel for the writing of this brief review of

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