

**T**he 1996 Food Quality Protection Act has changed forever the way pesticides will be evaluated. We could get into a protracted discussion about political agendas and implementation, but the fact remains the FQPA is the law under which we all must live from this day forward. How we live with that law is the now the question.

I attended an FQPA workshop for stakeholders in Tampa, Fla., in March. What I learned from Lois Rossi, director of EPA's Special Review and Reregistration Division, is that real-world data supplied to EPA can make a difference in how EPA assesses the risk of a product. You, as a pesticide user, must help fill in the gaps between EPA's assumptions and your reality.

Here are some ideas I gathered from the workshop to assist you:

- **Form coalitions to broaden understanding and support for stakeholders' interests.** Time spent with manufacturers, regulators and others, including public interest groups, should help all parties better understand competing interests and result in a more balanced implementation of the law.

- **Invest in collecting facts and data that can be used to help define risk assessments.** For example, good management practices that may suggest mitigation measures and usage data can help define risk. The result should be more realistic risk assessments, more uses retained as currently registered products undergo review, and more confidence in the validity of the final decisions.

- **Maintain credibility and retain integrity.** This is an important aspect of stakeholder involvement as since no one gains if data or information is mischaracterized or misused.

- **Lobby for adequate support and oversight to ensure a credible, scientifically based process by the regulatory agencies.** Government is faced with implementing a particularly complex law without all the tools (science and regulatory policies, as well as data) to make the best decisions.

- **Document actual or potential impacts of decisions being made under the law.** This must be done objectively to ensure the information will be

## FQPA: Speak Out Or Lose Out

BY JOEL JACKSON



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used. Spreading tales and exaggerating impacts may feel good initially but often leads to misunderstandings, lost opportunities and adverse decisions.

**Develop and use better education materials and communication messages (and messengers).** Do this to advance the cause of pesticide users, and the importance of their practices and products to the national and international community.

**Be constructive.** In a time when product lines are at stake and alternatives seem in short supply, it's easy to get outraged. It's far more useful to find ways to take advantage of stakeholder insight regarding use practices, and to provide solid and constructive ideas on how to advance positive decisions.

**Develop specific pest management ideas and options (commodity specific) that will allow appropriate access to pest management tools as regulatory decisions are made.** For example, if your commodity has a particular pest problem for which an organophosphate represents the only effective tool, a stakeholders' group could work with the affected registrants and appropriate governmental agencies to develop a pest management strategy. This strategy should help maximize the availability of viable turf protection tools, while it recognizes and supports emerging pest management options.

Current product registrations that are either up in the air or down for the count are: Chipco 26019, Turcam, Oftanol (registrations withdrawn or cancelled); and Daconil, Dursban and Namacur (all pending EPA reviews).

You can help implement the FQPA in a fair and reasonable manner or you can live with the consequences of standing by in silence. The choice is yours.

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