

Rules set for genetically altered biological pesticides

The Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) has announced a new set of regulations for testing or introduction into the environment of genetically altered microbes.

Long an important issue with the public, the E.P.A.'s new rules require prior screening of microbial pesticides that are the result of introduced genetic material and that display new activities, characteristics, or whose behavior can be demonstrated to be less predictable than the unaltered base species.

This new screening process acknowledges the unnecessarily highly restrictive nature of previous regulations. It targets only releases of genetically altered microbes, whereas the previous regulations required all

microbial pesticides, altered or not, to be subject to testing and screening prior to release into the environment.

TGT's view: Perhaps this E.P.A. streamlining of the regulatory procedures prior to testing or sale of newly developed biological pesticides will quiet some of the hysterical ravings that have been heard on this subject and help get these new tools into turfgrass managers' hands faster than they would have previously. At the very least E.P.A. officials acknowledge the reality that in the vast majority of cases, research that was being conducted on microbial pesticides was work that was being conducted on species gleaned from nature. -CS

West Va. University study

Control of Cicada Killer Wasp tunneling possible

Two studies conducted at West Virginia University have found that direct applications of insect controls to wasp burrows are far more successful at controlling the tunneling activities of Cicada Killer Wasps.

In the first study, liquid applications of insecticides were broadcast applied over an entire infested areas of play at a local golf course. During the first eight days after treatment there was substantial suppression, but by the 13th day heavy tunneling activity returned to all test areas.

The results of the second study found that when liquid applications were made directly into the burrow entrance or when an application was made to the area of excavated soil immediately outside the entrance to the burrow that 100% control was evidenced at 3 days after application. Both methods of application were effective at suppressing tunneling activity, with direct application into and around burrow entrances found to be the most effective.

E.P.A. sets review of Triazine-based herbicides

Based on the possible link between the exposure to Triazine-based pesticides and the accelerating incidence of human breast cancers, the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) has initiated a special review of the three chemically similar pesticides: Atrazine, Cyanazine and Simazine. Recent studies of animals exposed to these three Triazine based compounds indicate an increased level of incidence of breast tumors in certain strains of rats. This coupled with recently published human epidemiological studies pointing to a possible link between increased rates of breast cancer in American women and exposures to environmental toxins, such as pesticides led the E.P.A. to under taken this review.

Several ground water and surface water studies have identified Triazine based herbicide residues in drinking

water supplies, particularly in Midwest agriculture production regions during the spring and summer seasons.

These three herbicides are some of the most widely used pesticides in the country with about 100 million pounds applied annually. They are used predominately on agricultural crops, but they are also used as preemergent herbicides on warm-season turfgrass stands.

TGT's view: The E.P.A. drinking water survey of several years ago clearly identified the Triazine herbicides or their intermediate break-down products as pollutants in drinking water supplies. This led to the implementation of restrictions on their use in 1990. Any positive correlation that is demonstrated during the course of this Special Review between human exposure and increased levels of breast cancer will appropriately lead to the cancellation of all uses of these products. -CS