
Government News

The USDA has established a national agricultural pesticide assessment program to assist the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency in a comprehensive evaluation of pesticides needed in the production, processing and distribution of crops, livestock and forest products, Acting Secretary of Agriculture John A. Knebel announced today.

Amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act require that EPA review all existing pesticide registrations and make reregistration decisions. Any pesticide that exceeds certain EPA risk criteria will not be reregistered until EPA determines that its benefits exceed any risks associated with the use of the product.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train has accepted a plan proposed by the State of Mississippi to end all use of the controversial pesticide Mirex for fire ant control in the South by June 30, 1978.

Regarding substitutes, Train said that the pesticides diazinon and dimethoate and insect juvenile hormones "show some promise but have not been adequately tested." In addition, a Mississippi State University scientist is now experimenting in combining Mirex with amine compounds to increase its degradation time from years to days.

Twenty-four oriental fruit flies have now been trapped in Los Angeles, California--a situation that may prove to be the third major fruit fly infestation in that state in three years--the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced.

California's last oriental fruit fly outbreak was eradicated in the San Diego area in May 1975, after having been detected the previous September. Some 528 oriental fruit flies were trapped and many others killed at bait stations before the infestation was eradicated.

Under a cooperative agreement with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Boyce Thompson Research Institute of Yonkers, N. Y. will investigate the culturing of a mosquito parasite, the nematode Reesimermis nielsenii, in vitro--in an artificial environment outside the living host.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service will provide \$25,000 for the research, which would also serve as a model system to extend others in vitro studies to control mosquitoes and other biting flies.

EPA has requested 12 companies to submit samples of herbicides which may contain nitrosamines, suspected carcinogens.