

Government News

The FIFRA certification amendment of S1678 may be revised. The anticipated revision would provide that EPA would "consult" with state governors in initiating federal applicator certification. As adopted by the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, the amendment would provide for federal certification of applicators only if requested by state governors.

The question of whether the state applicator certification program is proceeding "as envisioned" will be studied by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), under a \$180,000 cooperative agreement with the EPA.

CEQ will let a contract to one of six proposed firms to do the actual study. The evaluation will look at the need for the certification training program "from the standpoint of cost effectiveness, benefit to applicators themselves and to society in general and to clarify the impact of re-registration classification and labeling determinations," according to the interagency agreement.

The evaluation will determine whether training courses, training materials and certification programs need to be improved. Variations in quality between state examinations and the value of continuing education programs as a condition of recertification will also be assessed.

Section 5 experimental use permits issued recently by the EPA included one to the Forest Service for use of 25,460 baits of synthetic beetle pheromone to suppress bark beetles in a Dutch elm disease control program. The program is authorized in Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., D.C., Ill., Mass., Mich., Minn., N.Y., N.C., R.I., S.C., Vt., Va. and Wis. The permit is in effect from May 18, 1977 to May 18, 1978.

A permit was also issued to Aldine Products Co. to allow the use of 1,800 pounds of the fungicide dichlorophene on trees to evaluate control of Dutch elm disease. That program involves 711 trees in Ill., Ind., Maine, Mich., Ohio, Pa. and Wis.

The EPA's "expedient, but unjust" pesticide hazard evaluation policy "will certainly result in the banning of highly beneficial compounds and uses for which the risk to man is, at best, hypothetical," according to a paper prepared by the National Agricultural Chemicals Association's (NACA) toxicology committee.

The NACA paper, in summary, had three recommendations for EPA to adopt as solutions to the problems: (1) Publicly acknowledge the inadequacies of the tests for cancer and be willing to defer action when the data are not clear; (2) return the authority for decisions on hazard evaluation to qualified scientists within the agency, being guided by a uniform national cancer assessment policy; and (3) after insuring that the experimental studies were properly done, let the data set the course of action: to permit, to ban or to defer without prejudice."