

Government News

A case involving inferior grass seed which was called to federal attention beginning in 1971 by Maryland Turf and Seed officials has been settled in an Illinois U.S. District Court.

Maurice H. Day, Chief of the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Turf and Seed Regulatory Section, says that the Seaboard Seed Company of Briston, Illinois, paid a \$2,750 settlement to end the case which was brought against it by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

Ray Brush, of the American Association of Nurserymen, spent 8 hours on the witness stand defending nursery uses of chlordane and heptachlor in testimony at pesticide cancellation hearings convened by the Environmental Defense Fund.

Attorneys for Velsicol Chemical and the United States Department of Agriculture aided Brush in preparing his testimony. The hearings have not been completed.

Responding to a voluntary request from Hooker Chemicals and Plastics Corp. of New York, the EPA has proposed to officially end all U.S. sale of a chemical compound called BHC or benzene hexachloride which is common used in making pesticide products.

Hooker requested the EPA sales prohibition, technically called a cancellation of registration, in September 1976 after learning that EPA was evaluating BHC's environmental and human health effects. Hooker said it had actually stopped making the BHC pesticide ingredient, known as "technical grade" material, 4 months earlier.

OSHA has revised its directive concerning methods of guarding workers from physical contact with the point of operation of power press brakes. (A point of operation is the area of a machine where work is actually performed upon the material being processed.)

OSHA requires use of guarding devices to prevent a worker from having any part of his body in the point of operation while the machine is running. When guarding devices cannot be installed, alternate protective measures must be used. Such alternate measures include methods of keeping the worker at a safe distance from the point of operation.

The EPA has issued a list of agricultural pesticides that are candidates for restricted use only by farmers and others that have shown they can safely handle and apply them.

Under the 1972 Federal pesticides law, the application of restricted use pesticides will be limited only to certified applicators or persons working under their supervision. This program will take effect on October 21, 1977.

A proposed job health standard that would reduce worker exposure to cotton dust has been announced by OSHA. OSHA also announced that a public hearing on the proposal will begin April 5, 1977.

The proposal would reduce the present OSHA standard (1,000 micrograms of total dust per cubic meter of air) to 200 micrograms of respirable dust per cubic meter of air measured by a vertical elutriator. Respirable dust is proposed as the measure since larger, non-respirable dust particles are not thought to be harmful.