

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

EPA will vigorously enforce Silvex ban

A. E. Conroy II, director of the Pesticides and Toxic Substances Enforcement Division said that enforcement of the Environmental Protection Agency's emergency suspension of 2,4,5-T and Silvex on Feb. 28 will be "vigorous". Suspended uses of all pesticides containing Silvex are: commercial and ornamental turf uses including recreational areas, aquatic weed control and ditch bank uses, forestry uses, right-of-ways uses, and home and garden uses.

Precautions added to Kerb uses

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed that uses of the pesticide pronamide, marketed as Kerb, be allowed to continue as currently used on turf, commercial nursery plantings, plus some other agronomic crops, but with additional precautions to reduce potential risks to human health. "In general, EPA has concluded that for all uses the economic benefits of pronamide outweigh its risks," Steven Jellinek, assistant administrator said. The benefits come primarily from its use on lettuce and alfalfa. Jellinek added that approximately \$17.3 million might be lost by growers.

The use of the pesticide would be restricted to trained applicators wearing protective clothing, and pronamide would be marketed only in water soluble packaging to keep down dust emissions when mixing.

EPA's proposal is not a final action. The proposal will be reviewed by the Agency's Scientific Advisory Panel, the USDA, pronamide registrants, environmental groups and other interested parties. EPA will consider comments in reaching a final decision.

AQUATIC

Abscisic acid helps control pondweed

Lars Anderson, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, suggests using a plant growth regulator and careful water level management to modify pondweed so it is more susceptible to herbicides. The regulator, abscisic acid (ABA), occurs naturally in some fruits and the herbicides are commercially available.

Current attempts to rid canals of aquatic weeds by using herbicides are not very effective and are limited by lack of chemicals registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Herbicides, in order to work, must be added to irrigation water in such huge volumes that the cost is prohibitive or the risk of chemical residues on crops being irrigated is too great.

Pondweed is especially troublesome because it spreads by rhizomes, underground stems that send up shoots which eventually grow into other complete weeds. Cutting or other physical control methods are usually a waste of time and effort. The weeds just grow back as fast, or faster, than they can be removed, or are spread further down

the canal.

Normally in spring, pondweed first forms long, narrow submerged leaves, suited for underwater growth. Floating leaves usually are produced later in the season.

Anderson proposes flooding weed-infested irrigation waterways in early spring for 2 to 3 days. After draining the water, pondweed would germinate and begin forming leaves. Under these conditions of water stress, floating-type leaves are normally formed, or could be induced to form with a spray of ABA which causes pondweed to prematurely produce floating leaves. These leaves are much akin to leaves of terrestrial plants and can be killed with direct herbicide spray. Unlike the submerged leaves, floating leaves have stomata on their upper leaf surfaces for exchanging carbon dioxide and oxygen. These stomata may also allow penetration of herbicides. Preliminary greenhouse studies have shown that herbicides such as Dalapon, simazine or glyphosate can control American pondweed when sprayed directly on the weed about 1 week after the ABA treatment or water stress. Anderson suggests that this system could be used in the field before canals are needed for irrigation.

The next phase of Anderson's

research with USDA's Science and Education Administration is to determine minimum spray rates for effective control. He is also experimenting with 6 other growth regulators.

Of course more data must be collected before approval can be obtained from EPA and before any recommendations can be made. However all three herbicides are currently approved for other crop uses, and Dalapon is registered for use on irrigation canals.

TURF

FMC/Bolens-Jacobsen settle out of court

FMC Corporation, manufacturers of Bolens lawn and garden equipment, has reached an out-of-court settlement with Jacobsen Manufacturing Company, Inc., Racine, Wisconsin, in regard to a patent infringement suit initiated by FMC against Jacobsen last fall, according to Robert E. Bergen, division manager of FMC's Outdoor Power Equipment Division.

The suit, filed on November 18, 1977 by FMC was for damages, and to enjoin Jacobsen from infringing U.S. patent No. 3,085,386 which relates to a rotary lawn mower marketed by FMC under the Bolens Mulching Mower trademark.

In the terms of the settlement, FMC granted a license agreement to Jacobsen (for an undisclosed amount) covering the life of the Bolens Mulching Mower patent.

According to FMC, the patented Bolens Mulching Mower revolutionized the rotary lawn mower industry in the 1960's. The mower utilizes a special cutting chamber without a discharge chute along with a multi-pitched blade which cuts and then re-cuts the grass clippings, blowing them down into the lawn, thereby eliminating the need for raking and bagging.

SOIL

Texas scientists study effects of iron oxide

Research is underway at Texas A&M University to develop ways to predict whether certain soil management practices, such as liming or heavy fertilization, will improve or hurt soil properties by changing the reaction of iron oxides. Scientists with The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station say that iron oxide min-