

VIEWPOINT

Ron Morris, Technical Editor

"MONSTER BUG" ATTACKS!

Last year it destroyed \$45 million worth of cotton, this year it could be \$74 million worth of lettuce. Front page news. Government issues emergency permits on chemicals deadly to fish, mildly toxic to animals.

Really sounds like the government knows what it is doing, doesn't it? I was concerned with writing about 2,4,5-T, the infamous "Agent Orange" — which we all know it really isn't — but front page news tends to detract from the issue at hand.

I am against use of unknown, deadly to fish, toxic to animals, types of chemicals. On the other hand I am all for use of chemicals that have been run through the scientific world and many, many facts are known to prove their use reasonably safe.

So, if scientists think the stuff is safe when used as directed, why the furor over 2,4,5-T? Is Rivera a scientist? B — a reporter? C — an investigator? Granted, Agent Orange could've been dangerous. It was a combination of highly volatile esters of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, sprayed at extremely high rates. 3,000 to 30,000 times the rate that 2,4,5-T is used on forests by the forest service today. It could've caused grotesquely abnormal children and miscarriages, but if that is so, then the scien-

tists who went to investigate and said that, in the aftermath, the rates for that type of thing were below normal for that area are downright blatant liars.

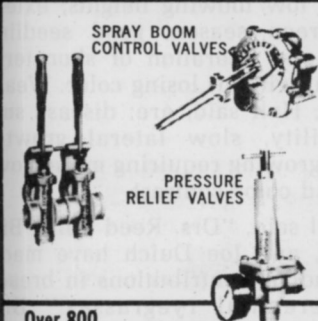
Dioxin, the most deadly poison known, and Agent Orange, have clouded the issues. It is no longer scientific, but now becomes a scare issue. So scary in fact, that EPA refuses to issue a water tolerance level.

In 1976, a reactor in Italy exploded, exposing resident of a small town north of Milan to TCDD, a member of the dioxin family. According to Dow Chemical company, TCDD concentrations were reported in medical journals as 1 million times greater than those that occur from agricultural treatments with 2,4,5-T. There were no embryonic malformations found in thirty women who underwent therapeutic abortions, nor were there any cases of severe human illnesses.

To sum it up, in my opinion, the EPA has let the issue become one of emotions. That should not be the case. EPA should be concerned with reporting scientific data on the toxicity of materials, determined by scientific methods by scientists. This data should stand on its own. If the data shows it is toxic at a certain level, then that level should not be reached in any application.

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