

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

by William Hoffman



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Four indicted for falsifying safety data

Four former employees of Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories, Inc., (IBT) were charged with giving EPA false safety data on two pesticide active ingredients from 1970 to 1977. The indictments specified fraudulent mice carcinogenicity tests on Sencor, a herbicide widely used on corn and soybeans, and Nemacur, a broad spectrum nematicide. EPA has asked the registrant, Chemagro Corporation, to repeat the false IBT studies.

During the early 1970s, IBT also conducted studies on another 200 pesticide active ingredients. Prominent on the list are chemicals such as acephate, atrazine, propoxur, pyrethrin, simazine, terrazole, toxaphene, captan, carbaryl, 2,4-D, DDVP, folpet, metasystox and paraquat. EPA initiated a review of these tests in 1978 and in some cases manufacturers have supplied new safety data. The economic applications of summarily removing some of the chemicals from the market are so serious that EPA chose to take the review route.

Agriculture Canada is also looking at the IBT-tested pesticides and will likely adopt a review technique similar to the one used in the United States.

Minor use pesticide data given boost

The EPA has just awarded a \$35,000 grant to the IR-4 Project for development of data for minor use pesticides. The project, initiated by the USDA in 1963, aids growers of minor crops by coordinating the activities of various state and federal agencies to secure labels and tolerances for minor uses of pesticides. To date, more than \$6 million has been spent in this effort.

Four years ago, IR-4 expanded from only food crop projects to non-food products, such as annual and perennial floral crops, shrubs, trees, tropical foliage, and turfgrasses. Data from research generated through 1980 have made it possible to assemble registration packages for 1,760 ornamentals involving 19 insecticides, 15 fungicides, and 15 herbicides. From these 969 new label registrations were granted.

The IR-4 program has had a large impact on interior plant pest control. The Interior Plantscape Association has been a driving force behind these efforts.

The research and data are done in USDA laboratories, state agricultural experiment stations, and private locations utilizing a team approach.

Safety agency seeks chain saw standards

The Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) has begun developing a safety standard for chain saws aimed at reducing the risk of injury to users caused by kickback. In 1978, nearly 100,000 persons required medical attention after being injured while using chain saws. About one quarter of these injuries occurred when the saws kicked back. The CPSC estimates that the actual cost of kickback injuries in 1979, not including pain and suffering, was \$24 million. There are nearly 18 million saws in use: 85 percent are gasoline powered and the remainder are electrically powered. Most (85 percent) of the injuries are caused by gasoline powered saws, especially those with a cubic inch displacement of less than 3.5.

The Commission has been working with the chain saw industry and the Chain Saw Manufacturing Association on a safety standard since 1977. It has now decided it would be more expeditious to develop the standard itself and hopes to have one completed by July 31, 1982.

The Commission is one of the independent Federal regulatory agencies targeted for extinction by the Reagan Administration. Congress has objected to such a move. The Commission may end up much smaller and in the U.S. Department of Commerce.