

## PESTICIDES

# No evidence linking 2,4-D with human cancer, EPA says

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has yet to see evidence linking the herbicide 2,4-D to human cancer. It has tentatively given the compound a Category C classification.

The classification means the compound is a "possible human carcinogen with limited evidence of carcinogenicity in animals," says Doug McKinney, who was the EPA's special review manager for 2,4-D at the time the classification was announced.

The classification was made after the EPA's 2,4-D peer review panel completed a literature survey for 2,4-D.

A category A classification would mean the compound is a human carcinogen. Category B would mean there is cause for concern of carcinogenicity.

Category C means there is some possibility of animal carcinogenicity, McKinney said, but the data is inconclusive.

The review panel's work will be examined by the EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel, according to McKinney. That panel will either agree with the review panel or ask for more information. The advisory panel was scheduled to meet June 25.

A Canadian panel, meanwhile, concluded there is no conclusive data

linking 2,4-D to cancer in humans or animals. The Expert Panel Report on Carcinogenicity of 2,4-D, dated March 23, prompted the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to remove a moratorium on the introduction and use of new 2,4-D products.

"Overall, the panel concludes that the existing animal and human data are insufficient to support the finding that 2,4-D is a carcinogen and, consequently, finds insufficient evidence to conclude that existing uses of 2,4-D in Ontario pose a human health risk," states the report.

"I think they've done a pretty good job trying to review all the studies," notes Greg Richards, chemical products manager for Lesco, Inc., Rocky River, Ohio. "It doesn't seem to be all politically motivated."

Even if the EPA does change the product's user status at some time in the future, Richards said, "At least this (scientific approach) gives us some more time to develop other products that can do the job of 2,4-D."

"As time has gone, their (the EPA's) actions in this manner have gone along in a careful pace," said Dr. Wendell Mullison, consultant to the Dow Chemical Co. "The fact that they're doing this is very optimistic."

—Elliot Maras

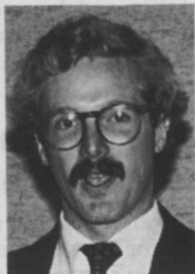
## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

# Drugs and other problems

It's a subject that's received widespread publicity. It's an emotional and controversial topic. But testing employees for drugs is necessary, says attorney Richard Lehr.

Operating mowers and other equipment is as dangerous as driving under the influence. "Do you want to wait for an accident?" Lehr asks. "You are strictly liable for the acts of your employees."

Besides drug testing, Lehr advocates thoroughly checking out an employee before making a hiring decision. Check the



applicant's safety record, driving record and absenteeism. In the interview, ask applicants what they liked and disliked about their past supervisor. "A problem with an employee in the first year is a hiring mistake," Lehr says. "In the second year, it's a management mistake."

Lehr warns that another management mistake is using disclaimers. A disclaimer is a statement in a contract which says that the company is not responsible for certain mishaps.

"Disclaimers are not favored by the courts and are viewed against the writer of it—you," Lehr says.

Making promises or guarantees in advertising or contracts is also viewed against the company. "If you're using the term 'guarantee,' you may create a warranty," Lehr says.

## 1-2-3

**W**hile we may take precautions to prevent accidental poisoning from pesticides, we are often unprepared when such an occasion arises. It is critical to be prepared, especially since a life could be at stake. Remember these procedures. It could save a life.

1. If a victim has stopped breathing, commence artificial respiration.

2. Immediately call a poison control center or doctor.

3. Remove contaminated clothing, wash skin, hair and fingernails with soapy warm water, dry and keep the victim warm.

4. If the pesticide has gotten into an eye, gently rinse with clear running water quickly, continuing for at least 15 minutes.

5. If pesticides have been inhaled, carry the victim to fresh air and keep calm, in the event of convulsions, watch victim's breathing and protect the head from injury. Keep the chin up to keep air passages free.

6. If the pesticide is swallowed, induce vomiting in *conscious* victims. If unconscious, showing signs of convulsions or has swallowed petroleum or other corrosives, do *not* induce vomiting. The blunt end of a spoon, two tablespoons of salt in water or syrup of ipecac will induce vomiting. To keep vomitus out of the lungs, have the victim face-down with head lowered. If the victim can swallow after ingesting a corrosive poison, give as much milk or water as can be tolerated.

7. Take the victim to a hospital as quickly as possible.

8. Give the container and remaining to the doctor. If this can't be done, give him a sample of the vomitus.