

EPA Bans Ingredients from use in Organic Production

by Sustainable Food News
September 12, 2007

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has banned eight inert ingredients, primarily used as pesticides in organic production, from use under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program (NOP).

NOP regulations allow the use of inert ingredients appearing on two lists the EPA maintains.

The two lists combined are referred to as the "Inerts List" and include:

List 4A - Minimal Risk Inert Ingredients, and List 4B - Other ingredients for which EPA has sufficient information to reasonably conclude that the current use pattern in pesticide products will not adversely affect the public health or the environment.

But, according to the NOP, those lists "may no longer be effective or available" following a reassessment of inert ingredients in pesticide products to ensure that they meet the safety standard established by the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).

The reassessment, completed last year, resulted in the revocation of some List 4 inert ingredients, banning them from use in organic production under NOP regulations.

Also impacted the EPA review and labeling program for determining the compatibility of pesticides with NOP regulations, which now need to be amended to acknowledge the inert tolerance reassessments conducted by EPA.

In the meantime, the NOP said it is advising parties reviewing pesticide product ingredients for compliance with federal organic regulations to use EPA's August 2004 lists of approved List 4 inert ingredients, minus the revoked inert ingredients (see list below).

The NOP said it also agreed with a request from the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), which recommends organic standards to the USDA, that inert ingredients reassessed by EPA, but not previously authorized for use under the NOP, remain prohibited in organic agriculture.

Until the NOP and NOSB can determine the "best course to take" in response to EPA's reassessment decisions, organic agriculture operators must petition the NOSB to use such ingredients, the agency said.

Petitioned substances must be recommended by the NOSB and added to the National List through notice and comment rulemaking before use in organic agriculture. The policy will remain in effect until superseded by regulatory changes or new guidance, NOP said.

List 4 inert ingredients that have been revoked for use in pesticide formulations and are now prohibited under NOP are as follows:

- Acetylated lanolin alcohol (CAS Reg. No. 91994-94-4); Revoked in 70 FR 31401, June 1, 2005.
- Acrylic acid methyl ester, polymer with acrylonitrile and 1,3-butadiene (CAS Reg. No. 27012-62-0); Revoked in 71 FR 14411, March 22, 2006; the tolerance exemption is called "Nitrile rubber modified acrylonitrile methylacrylate conforming to 21 CFR 177.1480.
- Coumarone - indene resin (CAS Reg. No. 63393-89-5); Revoked in 71 FR 14411, March 22, 2006.
- Manganous oxide (CAS Reg. No. 1344-43-0); Revoked in 71 FR 45415, Aug. 9, 2006.
- Pentaerythritol monostearate (CAS Reg. No. 78-23-9); Revoked in 71 FR 14411, March 22, 2006.
- Pentaerythritol tetrastearate (CAS Reg. No. 115-83-3); Revoked in 71 FR 14411, March 22, 2006.
- Polyglyceryl phthalate ester of coconut oil fatty acid (CAS Reg. No. 66070-87-9); Revoked in 71 FR 45415, Aug. 9, 2006.
- Sodium fluoride (CAS Reg. No. 7681-49-4); Revoked in 70 FR 31401, June 1, 2005.