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US registration decisions on the rise

The US EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) completed 1,620 registration actions under the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) in fiscal 2007. This represented a 21% increase over the 1,347 decisions in fiscal 2006 (Agrow No 515, p 14). The number of completed actions has consistently increased each year since the PRIA came into effect in 2004, the OPP points out. All of the actions were completed within PRIA due dates in fiscal 2007.

The OPP completed 1,189 registration decisions for conventional pesticides under the PRIA in fiscal 2007, compared with 957 in the previous year. Seventeen decisions were made for new food-use active ingredients, whereas there were only four such decisions in fiscal 2006. The average time to complete the registration decisions for this category was 648 days in fiscal 2007 and 286 days in fiscal 2006. Actions appeared to be completed in "substantially less time" than allowed under the PRIA in previous years because applications were submitted before the law took effect and benefited from work carried out before March 23rd 2004, the OPP points out.

The average decision time for the ten reduced-risk food-use ais registered in fiscal 2007 was 738 days. The OPP is uncertain why reduced-risk ais took longer to process than conventional ones. "The number of reduced-risk decisions is sufficiently small that an adequate analysis cannot be conducted to identify a specific reason for this observation," the OPP states. However, it points out that reduced-risk status is not requested as frequently as it was in the past.

Completion dates were extended by mutual agreement with applicants for 7% of conventional pesticide registration decisions. The overall rate of extensions was 13% in fiscal 2007 because of a higher proportion of extensions for biopesticides (42%) and antimicrobials (25%). Extensions generally resulted from missing or deficient data, the OPP notes. It completed 123 registration decisions for biopesticides and 309 for antimicrobials during the year.

The OPP received 13% more registration applications in fiscal 2007 than in the previous year. There was a 15% rise in applications for conventional pesticides, 10% for biopesticides and 8% for antimicrobials. However, as more decisions were completed in fiscal 2007 than in the previous year, the number of applications pending at the end of the year declined. There were 1,207 applications in the registration queue at the end of fiscal 2007, compared with 1,256 a year earlier. There were 48 non-reduced-risk, food-use ais pending decisions at the end of fiscal 2007, compared with 54 in the previous year. The number of reduced-risk, food-use ais awaiting a decision fell from 22 to 18.

The EPA received \$13.7 million in registration fees in fiscal 2007, with \$12.3

million carried forward from the previous year. After subtracting \$620,000 for overpayments and withdrawals, the balance amounted to \$25.4 million. The Agency spent approximately \$15.1 million of this during the year and carried over \$10.3 million to fiscal 2008. Expenditure increased by 40% in fiscal 2007 and the end-of-year balance dropped by 16%.

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