

Activities of ESA SME Liaison to EPA, February 11, 2020
Submitted by Allan Felsot

Plans are being made to visit EPA OPP headquarters in late March or early April. Presently we are negotiating the most optimal date for a visit when staff have more time. My contact at EPA OPP, Kelly Tindall, mentioned two items for possible discussions:

- 1) Thinking for the future – plan a EPA symposium for when ESA is at National Harbor (2023?)?
- 2) Sources to identify which insecticides are systemic, locally systemic, contact (direct spray or direct contact with a treated surface), and/or contact (from eating treated foliage)? Are there specific definitions for these ways to kill insects?

Additionally, the staff would like me to consider making another presentation; they are still pondering a specific topic they would like to know more about.

During the last month, I was informed by Erin Cadwalader of a company selling a non effective “insect control” device called the Spartan Mosquito Eradicator (<https://spartanmosquito.com/mosquito-control/>) that is claimed to eliminate mosquitoes without the use of any toxicant in a device that putatively attracts adults. I was pointed to a blog post by photographer Colin Purrington who has been highly negatively critical of this device and has done significant background research. The device claims to control mosquitoes and is being sold with a registration under the Section 25b rule (minimum risk pesticides). However, for insect control technologies aimed at vectors of diseases, efficacy must be proven, otherwise the device would not qualify for a 25b exception. I’ve been in contact with Purrington and he has told me that he has been in contact with the EPA OPP and a number of States, thinking they would act to stop sale. Some States actually do not allow the sale of the device because it has no proven efficacy. The concern now is the ineffective device is being sold to countries with endemic malaria. One possible concern for the ESA is that the principal owner of the company marketing the Spartan Mosquito Eradicator touts membership in the Society in a signature line of his emails (or correspondence).

Corteva has made the decision to stop selling chlorpyrifos in the U.S. While the company has publicly stated that they would still support its registration owing to their data confirming its comparative safety, they stated the decision was strictly economic. I was interviewed by a reporter from “Capital Press” before this announcement and informed him that with the decision of California to essentially ban chlorpyrifos, the dislocation of the market for the product would likely force Corteva into assessing the returns and thus end in not selling it. Pressure was also coming from WA State where the legislature is undertaking in committee a decision to greatly restrict its use. All of this concern about chlorpyrifos is “jumping the shark” because analysis of the USDA PDP (Pesticide Data Program) that has tracked pesticide residues shows a highly significant reduction of chlorpyrifos residues in food commodities since the decision to greatly restrict registered uses of the insecticide after 2000. Given that food intake represents about 80% or more of most consumers exposure to pesticide residues, the risk of chlorpyrifos exposure is approaching nil. The big drive for the ban is likely owing to a combination of two factors. First, EPA HED (Health Effects Division) reassessing the risk and using a new methodology that greatly exacerbates the risk calculation. Second, California has been an epicenter of worker complaints about drift and potential adverse reactions. One question that I’m trying to get some answers to is whether the stored grain insecticide methyl chlorpyrifos, which has a different toxicological profile than chlorpyrifos, will be swept up in the “ban”. Early indication from WA State is “maybe”.