Environmental Monitoring

Department of Pesticide Regulation/CalEPA

Protecting the air from pesticides

DPR Air Protection Program

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Air Monitoring Reports
http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/emon/pubs/tac/tacstdys.htm

Single copies of this handout are available from DPR by calling (916) 445-3974, or can be downloaded from DPR's Web site: www.cdpr.ca.gov under "Consumer Fact Sheets"

Tackling Toxic Air Contaminants

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) oversees the registration, sale and use of pesticides in California to protect public health and the environment — including our air.

Pesticides are evaluated to identify potential risks prior to approval for use in California. Any significant risks are addressed by either denying approval or developing rules for safe use.

The air program develops and evaluates computer models to characterize droplet drift from applications and the emissions from fumigant applications so they can be properly regulated. This protects adjacent sensitive crops from certain herbicides and helps characterize emissions from new fumigant pesticides so that they can be properly regulated.

DPR is guided in part by the Toxic Air Contaminant Act of 1983. In passing the act, state lawmakers created rules for listing, evaluating and controlling chemicals — including pesticides — as TACs. TACs are air pollutants that may cause or contribute to increases in serious illnesses or deaths or may pose a hazard to human health.

In carrying out the law, DPR reviews the physical properties, environmental fate and human health effects of candidate TAC pesticides, and recommends

The Department of Pesticide Regulation conducts many activities to prevent or reduce the adverse effects of pesticides on air quality. These activities include monitoring, assessing and regulating pesticides as toxic air contaminants and evaluating and regulating pesticides as sources of volatile organic compounds, which contribute to ground-level ozone formation.

Following the science, and the law

monitoring priorities for them.

DPR uses that information and monitoring results to prepare risk assessments, and then submits them for peer review by other scientists. DPR then takes appropriate actions to protect public health.

The department's air program monitors for pesticides in air both in response to reports of pesticides detected in air and as part of its periodic reevaluation of pesticides after registration.

DPR uses a network of stations in the state to monitor weekly for many pesticides in air to ensure that air quality is being protected.

DPR's air program also determines the need for, supports development of, and evaluates regulations and permit conditions to protect people from specific pesticides in air.

DPR assists enforcement personnel in investigating pesticide drift incidents, and provides oversight, training, and monitoring for pesticides used in the California Department of Food and Agriculture's pest eradication programs.

The ABCs of VOC control

The Clean Air Act requires states to have plans for meeting federal air quality standards, including the standard for ozone.

Gaseous Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) can react with other substances in the air to form ground-level ozone, a component of smog. In California, the primary source of VOCs is vehicle exhaust. Industrial operations also emit VOCs, as do thousands of products, including pesticides.

DPR requires pesticide manufacturers to submit VOC emission potential data for pesticides and uses that information along with pesticide use data to create and update a yearly inventory of pesticide VOC emissions.

In areas of California not meeting federal or state ozone standards, DPR has adopted regulations to reduce pesticidal sources of VOCs. For fumigant pesticides, generally only low-emission application methods are allowed between May 1 and Oct. 31 — the peak ozone period. For non-fumigant pesticides, the regulations establish trigger levels of pesticide VOC emissions that if exceeded, limit the use of certain high-VOC pesticides.

(EMON A E001 6/16)