



Department of Pesticide Regulation



Paul E. Helliker
Director

MEMORANDUM

Gray Davis
Governor
Winston H. Hickox
Secretary, California
Environmental
Protection Agency

TO: Sue Edmiston **HSM-02024**
 Agriculture Program Supervisor III
 WH&S Branch

FROM: Bernie Hernandez
 Associate Environmental Research Scientist
 445-4203

DATE: September 5, 2002

SUBJECT: PROJECT 0205 – METHOMYL REENTRY INCIDENT IN KERN COUNTY
 (40-KER-02)

On June 5, 2002 at approximately 0600 hours, 37 employees of a farm labor contractor (FLC) went into an 18-acre cardinal grape field belonging to Nalbandian/Kirschenmann Enterprises Inc. to tip grape clusters. The crew worked in the block the previous day and had not completed tipping all the clusters. The crew worked for about ten minutes when several crewmembers complained that they could smell an odor they had not noticed the previous day. The crew foreman contacted the FLC who contacted the ranch supervisor and was informed that nine acres of the 18-acre block had been treated that morning with Lannate® SP (methomyl). Methomyl has a restricted entry interval (REI) of 7 days. The crew was not notified of the methomyl application prior to entering the vineyard.

The FLC ordered his workers out of the field and had them wash their hands and faces. The grower advised the FLC to take the whole crew to Bakersfield and have them examined by Dr. Willard Christiansen. Dr. Christiansen is the medical supervisor for Nalbandian/Kirschenmann Enterprises Inc. and is familiar with pesticides used to treat grape vineyards. Dr. Christiansen saw 37 workers exhibiting symptoms of nausea, headache, and dermal irritation. All the workers were sent home after being examined and all 37 workers returned to work on June 6, 2002. The workers were not interviewed on June 6, 2002 because they were sent home at noon because of the heat, which was above 100°F. At least one worker sought additional medical treatment from Dr. Christianson because of continuing symptoms.

Al Lomeli (Pesticide Enforcement Central Regional Office (CRO), Fresno) notified the Worker Health and Safety (WH&S) Branch around 1100 hours on June 6, 2002. WH&S decided to investigate the incident since it involved potential early reentry, lack of worker notification and met 2002 priority investigation criteria. WH&S employee Bernie Hernandez was dispatched at 1330 hours. Al Lomeli advised that all contact would be conducted through Mario Ibarra (Pesticide Enforcement CRO) Mario Ibarra collected two 40-disc dislodgeable foliar residue (DFR) samples using the 2.54-cm leaf punch. Samples were collected in four-ounce glass jars and capped with a Teflon™-lined lid. Mario transferred the samples to me at 2045 hours. I double-bagged them, packed them on ice in insulated coolers, and shipped them to Sacramento via Greyhound. Cynthia Curtis picked up the samples on June 7 and delivered them to the



Sue Edmiston
September 5, 2002
Page 2

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Center for Analytical Chemistry, WH&S lab, for same-day extraction. Analyses were completed on June 10 2002. Methomyl was present on the DFR sample collected from the treated portion of the vineyard where the workers became ill ($0.025 \mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$, sample number KR02-0002). No residues were detected on the sample collected from the untreated portion of the vineyard (sample number KR02-0001, limit of quantitation = $0.003 \mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$) (see attached map). The application also included imidacloprid, sulfur, trifloxystrobin, potassium bicarbonate, and a spreader/binder/activator, however the samples were only analyzed for methomyl.

I remained in Kern County until approximately 1200 hours on June 7 to gather more information about the location where samples were collected relative to the methomyl application and the workers' location in the vineyard. I also wanted to be available should additional workers seek medical treatment, in which case I could assist with interviewing them (in Spanish). The Kern CAC continues to investigate the incident.

cc: C. Andrews

