

PESTICIDE REPORTS

Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources • Oklahoma State University

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CHEM

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ZIKA VIRUS CONFIRMED IN OKLAHOMA TRAVELERS

Two state residents acquired the Zika virus during international travel, the state Health Department confirmed Thursday.

These are the first laboratory confirmed cases of the virus in Oklahoma.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention laboratory in Fort Collins, Colo., notified the state Health Department of the results this past week.

The Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, though there also have been reports of transmission through sexual contact or from mother to unborn child.

The disease can cause fever, rash, muscle and joint aches, and red eyes. These symptoms typically last several days to a week, and hospitalizations are rare. Most people exposed to the virus won't develop any symptoms at all. The most significant health threat is for pregnant women because Zika virus infections have been linked to the birth defect microcephaly,

miscarriages and other poor birth outcomes in some women infected during their pregnancy.

In Oklahoma

Health officials said that mosquitoes in Oklahoma currently are not carriers of the Zika virus and the risk of contracting the virus is for people traveling to affected countries.

“We are recommending that individuals returning from travel to areas where Zika virus has been identified to consult with their physician if they exhibit any of the symptoms associated with the disease, particularly women who are pregnant,” state epidemiologist Kristy Bradley said.

“Fortunately for Oklahoma, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is not commonly found in the state.”

Southern states with greater presence of this mosquito are at higher risk of seeing cases of the virus spread locally.

However, health officials say a Zika virus epidemic is unlikely in the 48 contiguous states because of the widespread use of air conditioning, lower density of housing, and availability and use of mosquito repellents.

Advice

Health Department epidemiologists are working directly with health care providers statewide to determine whether their patients meet the criteria for testing and to arrange for testing to be conducted.

There is no vaccine, preventative medication or specific treatment drug available for the Zika virus.

The CDC and state Health Department advise pregnant women to delay travel to foreign countries

and U.S. territories where the virus is being transmitted.

Oklahomans traveling to Zika-affected areas over the upcoming spring break should take extra precautions to protect against mosquito bites.

To prevent the spread of the disease, people traveling to those areas should carefully follow steps to avoid mosquito bites while there and for seven days after returning home. (NewsOK March 3, 2016) <http://newsok.com/zika-virus-confirmed-in-oklahoma-travelers/article/5482577>

EPA MOVES TO CANCEL THE INSECTICIDE FLUBENDIAMIDE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a notice of intent to cancel all Bayer CropScience, LP and Nichino America, Inc., flubendiamide products that pose a risk to aquatic invertebrates that are important to the health of aquatic environments.

Required studies showed flubendiamide breaks down into a more highly toxic material that is harmful to species that are important part of aquatic food chains, especially for fish, and is persistent in the environment. EPA concluded that continued use of the product would result in unreasonable adverse effects on the environment. EPA requested a voluntary cancellation in accordance with the conditions of the original registration.

EPA had issued a time-limited registration to the companies with conditions that were understood and agreed upon. If unreasonable adverse effects on the environment were found by EPA, the companies would submit a request for voluntary cancellation of all flubendiamide registrations within one week of EPA notification.

EPA TAKES STRONG STEPS TO PREVENT POISONINGS AND PROTECT WORKERS FROM PARAQUAT

After being informed of the EPA's finding on January 29, 2016, the companies were asked to submit a request for voluntary cancellation by Friday, February 5, 2016. They rejected EPA's request to submit a voluntary cancellation. Subsequently, EPA initiated cancellation of all currently registered flubendiamide products for the manufacturers' failure to comply with the terms of the registration.

Flubendiamide is registered for use on over 200 crops, including soybeans, almonds, tobacco, peanuts, cotton, lettuce, alfalfa, tomatoes, watermelon, and bell peppers, with some crops having as many as 6 applications per year.

Crops that have been properly treated with flubendiamide or that may be treated with existing stocks can still be sold legally. Provisions on handling existing stocks of the pesticide will be finalized once the products have been cancelled.

To view a copy of the Notice of Intent to Cancel and all supporting documents:
<https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/flubendiamide-notice-intent-cancel-and-other-supporting>

The registrants or adversely affected parties have 30 days from the date of the Notice to request a hearing. Details on how to request a hearing are contained within the Notice of Intent to Cancel (EPA, March 1, 2016)

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/epa-moves-cancel-insecticide-flubendiamide>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to take action to stop poisonings caused by accidental ingestion of the herbicide paraquat, which can also cause severe injuries or death from skin or eye exposure.

“We are taking tough steps to prevent people from accidentally drinking paraquat and to ensure these tragic deaths become a thing of the past,” said Jim Jones, assistant administrator for the office of chemical safety and pollution prevention. “We are also putting safety measures in place to prevent worker injuries from exposure to this pesticide.”

Since 2000, there have been 17 deaths – three involving children caused by accidental ingestion of paraquat. These cases have resulted from the pesticide being illegally transferred to beverage containers and later mistaken for a drink and consumed. A single sip can be fatal. To prevent these tragedies, EPA is proposing:

- New closed-system packaging designed to make it impossible to transfer or remove the pesticide except directly into the proper application equipment;
- Special training for certified applicators who use paraquat to emphasize that the chemical must not be transferred to or stored in improper containers; and
- Changes to the pesticide label and warning materials to highlight the toxicity and risks associated with paraquat.

In addition to the deaths by accidental ingestion, since 2000 there have been three deaths and many severe injuries caused by the pesticide getting onto

the skin or into the eyes of those working with the herbicide. To reduce exposure to workers who mix, load and apply paraquat, EPA is proposing:

- Prohibiting application from hand-held and backpack equipment, and
- Restricting the use to certified pesticide applicators only (individuals working under the supervision of a certified applicator would be prohibited from using paraquat).

Paraquat is one of the most widely-used herbicides in the U.S. for the control of weeds in many agricultural and non-agricultural settings and is also used as a defoliant on crops such as cotton prior to harvest. The proposal will be available for a 60 day public comment period. EPA will consider all public comments before finalizing these proposed actions later this year.

Actions on specific pesticides are one way that EPA is protecting workers from pesticide exposure. EPA's revised Worker Protection Standard and proposed Certification and Training Rule will also protect farmworkers and pesticide applicators.

To view related documents and submit comments, go to docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0855 at www.regulations.gov. For more information on paraquat: <https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/paraquat-dichloride>. (EPA March 3, 2016) <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/epa-takes-strong-steps-prevent-poisonings-and-protect-workers-paraquat>

BAYER TO CONTEST EPA FLUBENDIAMIDE DECISION

Crop Science, a division of Bayer, announced today it has refused a request by EPA to voluntarily cancel the uses of flubendiamide in the United

States and instead will seek a review of the product's registration in an administrative law hearing.

The company believes the methods used by the EPA exaggerate environmental risk and would deny farmers access to a critical pest management tool. Sold in the U.S. by Bayer under the trade name Belt, flubendiamide is approved for use on more than 200 crops because of its strong pest performance, favorable environmental and toxicological profile, and excellent fit in integrated pest management (IPM) programs.

EPA claims uses of flubendiamide may harm benthic organisms that live in the sediment of waters near agricultural fields, without any evidence of harm in more than seven years of commercial use. Bayer strongly disagrees with the EPA's methodology, which is based on theoretical models and assumptions that exaggerate risk. Years of water monitoring studies have shown residues of flubendiamide and its metabolite are well within safe levels established for aquatic invertebrates.

"We are disappointed the EPA places so much trust on computer modeling and predictive capabilities when real-world monitoring shows no evidence of concern after seven years of safe use," said Dr. Peter Coody, Bayer Vice President of Environmental Safety.

"This would be a significant loss for growers of pistachios," said Richard Matoian, executive director of American Pistachio Growers. "The loss of this chemistry would make it more difficult than ever to control pests like the navel orange worm and the peach twig borer which are now significantly impacting pistachio production in California. What's ironic and unfortunate is this would force tree nut growers to resort to older, less effective, but more potentially disruptive chemistries to manage these same pests. Growers need more innovative

tools to help them manage destructive pests to produce healthy and abundant crops, not less.”

Bayer rejected the EPA’s request to voluntarily cancel the flubendiamide registration and anticipates a hearing in front of EPA’s independent Office of Administrative Law Judges for a review.

“Denying a product’s registration and ignoring its safe use history based on unrealistic theoretical calculations calls into question the EPA’s commitment to innovation and sustainable agriculture,” said Dana Sargent, Bayer Vice President of Regulatory Affairs.

While under review, farmers and retailers can continue to buy, sell and use the product in their operations. (CropLife February 5, 2016) <http://www.croplife.com/crop-inputs/bayer-announces-intention-to-contest-epa-flubendiamide-decision/>

DICAMBA-RESISTANT PIGWEED FIELD TRIAL ANNOUNCED

University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture researchers have selected dicamba-resistant pigweed to document how genetic resistance develops and how the industry must work to protect the few remaining weed-fighting options, according to a recent ArkansasOnline.com post.

Bob Scott, an extension weed scientist, emphasized that the finding was the result of controlled greenhouse studies and not a confirmation of anything found in any field.

“Through experimentation in the greenhouse, we selected a population of pigweed that is tolerant to the herbicide dicamba at a field rate,” Scott said. “This pigweed population was not found to be resistant to dicamba in nature or in any field.”

Scott’s colleagues, Jason Norsworthy, division weed scientist; Parsa Tehranchian, Norsworthy’s post-doctoral associate; and Stephen Powles, professor of plant biology at the University of Western Australia, designed the greenhouse experiment to examine the potential for the future of resistance.

The researchers began with dicamba-susceptible pigweed collected from the field. The researchers exposed three generations of pigweed to sublethal doses of dicamba, “which, of course, is a recipe for resistance development,” Scott said. (CropLife February 25, 2016) <http://www.croplife.com/crop-inputs/dicamba-resistant-pigweed-field-trial-announced/>

CAVALIERS' IRVING GETS APOLOGY AFTER BOUT WITH BED BUGS

Hilton Hotels apologized Feb. 23 after Cleveland Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving said he was bitten by bed bugs during a weekend stay in downtown Oklahoma City.

As ESPN.com reported, Irving played just nine minutes (in a Feb. 21) win over the Oklahoma City Thunder. Irving said he was suffering from sleep deprivation and a sore back after discovering bed bugs on a pillow, forcing him to sleep on a couch instead of his bed at the Skirvin Hilton.

Hilton and environmental health inspectors from the Oklahoma City-County Health Department both called it an isolated case and said the room was being treated.

"The comfort of our guests is a top priority, and we are very sorry to hear about Mr. Irving's stay," Hilton said. "Since bed bugs can be easily transmitted anywhere and are often lodged in luggage or on clothing, our hotel maintains high

levels of vigilance and we perform regular inspections."

Irving said he had just three hours of sleep the night before the game and felt nauseated. As he told ESPN.com, "Our team said I was out with flu-like symptoms," Irving said after the Cavs' 96-88 loss to the Detroit Pistons on Monday. "It was honestly from the bed bugs from the frickin' Hilton that we stayed at."

The Cavs, like most NBA teams that visit Oklahoma City for road games, stayed at the historic Skirvin Hilton Hotel. A spokesperson for the Skirvin confirmed to ESPN.com that there were indeed bed bugs found in Irving's room.

"Unfortunately, every hotel occasionally has a case of bed bugs," the spokesperson said. "This is one of those cases where a guest did bring in bed bugs to this particular room, and it was reported to us, fortunately, and we responded immediately and put the room out of order and all of the surrounding rooms to be inspected by a professional company.

"We actually had the company come out first thing [Monday] morning, and we found it was an isolated case in the one room, and we're taking the necessary steps to remediate the problem. (PCT Online, February 23, 2016)
<http://www.pctonline.com/article/bed-bugs-sideline-Irving>

US ENVIROS WANT SAY OVER CALIFORNIA GLYPHOSATE LISTING

US environmentalists want to help the state of California contest a lawsuit filed by Monsanto that aims to block state officials from adding the herbicide, glyphosate, to its list of substances known to cause cancer.

The Center for Food Safety (CFS) says that its members "have unique interests" in the listing of glyphosate under California's Proposition 65 that may differ from the "broader interests" of the state. "CFS has long been ringing the alarm bells of the dangers of glyphosate, and we are confident that its listing under Proposition 65 is scientifically sound," says Adam Keats, a senior attorney at the advocacy group. "We believe that our expertise and experience will be invaluable in helping the state defend its actions."

Monsanto filed suit against California environmental officials in January to block them from adding glyphosate to the Proposition 65 list, arguing that listing the herbicide would violate state and federal law and cause the company "irreparable injury".

The suit is a pre-emptive strike by Monsanto against California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), which announced its intent to list glyphosate last September. State officials say that the proposal is justified because of the UN WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) conclusion that glyphosate is a probable human carcinogen.

The research center's findings drew sharp criticism from industry and agricultural groups, but the OEHHA contends that the IARC's conclusion is sufficient to trigger listing under the law that created Proposition 65. The statute was approved by California voters in 1986 to inform consumers about products that contain chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive harm.

The IARC is one of the "authoritative bodies" that can be relied upon for listing a chemical under Proposition 65 and the OEHHA contends that the statute effectively requires it to add glyphosate.

Monsanto questions that conclusion and says that the OEHHA has far greater discretion. Relying solely on the IARC declaration is unreasonable and unlawful, the company argues, and ignores its concerns about errors and flaws with the WHO body's review.

The stakes are potentially high for the company and for glyphosate users. Listing would likely require warning labels on products that contain glyphosate within the state of California, a move Monsanto says would violate its constitutional right to free speech.

The Proposition 65 law also prohibits California businesses from knowingly discharging significant amounts of listed chemicals into sources of drinking water. If glyphosate is added to the Proposition 65 list, farmers could potentially be liable if the herbicide was found at detectable levels in California waters.

The CFS' bid to intervene was expected. The organization is one of a number of environmental, organic and consumer groups that sent a letter to the OEHHA last October warning that the state agency had little choice but to make the listing final. "The only relevant question for OEHHA is whether the IARC, has, in fact, determined that glyphosate is a human or animal carcinogen," the groups said in their letter to the OEHHA. "We agree with the agency that the answer is yes." There can be "no dispute" that the IARC has concluded that glyphosate is an animal carcinogen and "OEHHA is required by law to make this listing", according to the letter from the CFS and 17 other organizations.

A hearing has been scheduled for the motion to intervene on April 27th in the Fresno Superior Court. (Pesticide & Chemical Policy/AGROW, March 3, 2016)

US BEEKEEPERS STUNG BY REQUEST FOR SULFOXAFLOR EXEMPTION

Beekeepers are calling on the US EPA to reject a request from the Texas Department of Agriculture for an emergency exemption that would allow the use of Dow AgroSciences' insecticide, Transform (sulfoxaflor) on up to 3 million acres (1.2 million ha) of sorghum until November 2016.

State officials made the request last December on behalf of sorghum farmers, arguing that the

exemption was needed to combat "unusually high populations" of sugar cane aphids (*Melanaphis sacchari*).

The EPA has granted 25 emergency exemptions for sulfoxaflor use since 2012 for the sugar cane aphid in 14 states, including Texas. But the landscape has changed since the last requests were granted. In November 2015, the EPA issued a cancellation order for all insecticide products containing sulfoxaflor in response to a court ruling that found that the Agency failed to adequately assess the potential harm to bees. The order prohibits further distribution and sale of sulfoxaflor products, but allows growers to use existing stocks. Dow is working with the EPA to get its registration reinstated.

The Pollinator Stewardship Council and Texas Beekeepers Association cited the court decision in their February 8th letter to the EPA, arguing that the Agency has little reason to grant the emergency exemption.

The US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit concluded that the EPA's registration of sulfoxaflor was "incomplete" and missing important data on the insecticide's effects on bees, according to the beekeepers. "The EPA needs to follow its mission to 'protect human health and the environment', and follow the Court's directive to secure additional data concerning the risks of sulfoxaflor to honey bees before permitting its use."

The groups also question the "validity" of the request, arguing that the EPA lacks "proof of significant economic loss" needed to justify the emergency exemption. (Pesticide & Chemical Policy/AGROW, February 11, 2016)

TERMINIX NAMES TOP TERMITE HOT SPOTS

Termites continue to gnaw at the minds of consumers in California, Texas, and Florida, according to a ranking released today by Terminix.

Notably, Los Angeles remains at the top of the list for the second year in a row, with the number of Californian cities jumping from four to five. Philadelphia rose by five spots, while Oklahoma City dropped three. The full list is below.

1. Los Angeles, Calif.
2. San Jose, Calif.
3. San Diego, Calif.
4. Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas
5. Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.
6. Miami, Fla.
7. Houston, Texas
8. Boston, Mass.
9. Atlanta, Ga.
10. Washington D.C.
11. Philadelphia, Pa.
12. Sacramento, Calif.
13. Oklahoma City, Okla.
14. Tampa, Fla.
15. Detroit, Mich.
16. Denver, Colo.
17. St. Louis, Mo.
18. Kansas City, Mo.
19. San Antonio, Texas
20. New York, N.Y.

This ranking was created by compiling termite-specific inbound lead data from more than 300 Terminix branches across the country. The rankings

represent Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with the highest volume of leads throughout 2015.

Los Angeles remains at the top of the list for the second year in a row, with the number of Californian cities jumping from four to five. Philadelphia rose by five spots, while Oklahoma City dropped three. Termite colonies are found in every state except Alaska, so despite their tendency to settle in warm climates, any city could be at risk for infestation.

"Weather patterns may have contributed to the decrease in termite swarm reports over the past decade," said Paul Curtis, board certified entomologist and manager of technical services at Terminix. "Recent forecasts of warmer, wetter weather could be favorable for termite swarming. But it's important to remember that termites do not depend on swarming to flourish and can cause serious damage in homes, business and other structures over time." (PCT Online, March 3, 2016) <http://www.pctonline.com/article/Terminix-termite-hot-spot-lists>

EXPERTS DEBUNK CLAIM BLAMING LARVICIDE, NOT ZIKA, FOR MICROCEPHALY

A report that the larvicide pyriproxyfen — not the Zika virus — is behind the recent surge in the cases of microcephaly in Brazil, is untrue, CBS News reported.

The claim has fueled conspiracy theories and allegations of a cover-up around the Internet, and even prompted officials in Brazil's southern state of Rio Grande do Sul to suspend the use of the insecticide over the weekend to allay concerns.

But Brazil's Ministry of Health and independent experts say there is no scientific basis linking the chemical to the birth defect in babies.

The claim originated with a group based in Argentina called Physicians in the Crop-Sprayed Villages. It released a report last week which states: "In the area where most sick persons live, a chemical larvicide producing malformations in mosquitoes has been applied for 18 months, and that this poison (pyroproxifen)[sic] is applied by the State on drinking water used by the affected population."

The group asserted that cases of microcephaly found in areas where thousands of pregnant women were exposed to pyriproxyfen "is not a coincidence." It also claimed that, so far, there have been no cases of microcephaly reported in other countries affected by Zika, such as Colombia, which have higher rates of the virus than Brazil. (In fact, there have been cases documented elsewhere, including French Polynesia following a Zika outbreak there in 2014.)

Brazilian officials were quick to respond, emphasizing that there is no scientific evidence backing the (PCT Online, February 19, 2016) <http://www.pctonline.com/article/larvacide-zika-claim-debunked>

US SENATE PANEL ADVANCES BILL TO PRE-EMPT STATE GMO LABELS

The US Senate Agriculture Committee voted 14-6 on March 1st to approve legislation to pre-empt state GMO labelling laws, with three Democrats crossing party lines to support the controversial bill. The vote is a major victory for opponents of mandatory GMO labelling, but the measure still faces a difficult road to make it through the full Senate.

In addition to derailing state GMO labelling laws, the Senate bill would require the USDA Secretary to establish a national voluntary labelling standard for genetically modified foods. The proposal, authored by Committee chairman Pat Roberts, a

Kansas Republican, also calls on the USDA to develop a programme to educate consumers about the benefits of agricultural biotechnology.

"This is really a conversation about a few states dictating to every state the way food moves from farmers to consumers in the value chain," Senator Roberts said. "We have a responsibility to ensure that the national market can work for everyone, including farmers, manufacturers, retailers, and consumers."

The three Democrats who voted in favour of the bill all voiced concern about the specifics of the proposal, but said that the possible harm to consumers and businesses from state labelling regimes justified their support. Looming over the debate is the prospect of the state of Vermont's GMO labelling law, which is set to enter into effect in July unless a federal court or Congress intervenes.

"We are running out of time," said Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat. Democratic Senators Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota joined Senator Klobuchar and all 11 of the panel's Republicans in support of the bill. The remaining six Democrats, including ranking member Debbie Stabenow of Michigan voted against the legislation.

Senator Klobuchar noted that Vermont's GMO labelling law contains an array of exemptions, including one for dairy products. By contrast, GMO labelling laws approved by the states of Maine and Connecticut do not exempt dairy. "We cannot have a patchwork of laws," she told colleagues. "This isn't going to work when some states are exempting the products that are near and dear to their hearts and other states aren't."

But Senator Klobuchar warned that she believes changes are needed to the bill "or it will not pass on the floor". She and the other Democrats who supported the measure all called for additional language to help consumers get more information about GMOs through means other than labelling. "We need to quickly enact legislation to ensure consumers can get the information they want without sticking misleading labels on every food

product," Senator Donnelly said. "Put that into the final legislation [and] I think it would then be able to pass."

Senator Heikamp cautioned that the public was unlikely to accept voluntary labelling or react positively to Congress pre-empting state law. "We are in many ways telling consumers ... that they don't need to know," she said. "That we know better than they do about what kind of information they need to know about what is in their food. That is a tough sell in a political environment where people think that Washington DC doesn't listen to them."

Senator Stabenow said absent some disclosure requirements the bill simply falls far short. The final measure "must contain a pathway to a national system of mandatory disclosure for consumers that provides consumers the information they need and want to make informed choices", she said. "I share your urgency to get this done," Senator Stabenow told the Committee chairman. "However, the bill before us today does not meet that important requirement. A voluntary programme is not enough to meet consumer demand and that is why I will not be voting for it today."

The Michigan Democrat, seen as a key figure in moving the bill forward, added that she has not given up on forging a deal. "While I am disappointed we were unable to reach a bipartisan compromise before this markup, I realise this is just the first step in the Senate process," Senator Stabenow said. "I remain committed to keep working ... to find a workable bipartisan solution to this issue that will address all of the legitimate issues in a fair and reasonable way."

The bill will likely require 60 votes to pass the Senate, including the support of at least six senators from the Democratic caucus. Individual senators could also put a hold on the legislation to delay its consideration (Pesticide & Chemical Policy/AGROW, March 2, 2016)

USDA SET TO LAUNCH OVERHAUL OF GM CROP RULES

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is poised to take the first official step towards a long-awaited revamp of its regulations of genetically modified plants. The agency said on Tuesday that it intended to publish a formal notice this week that it has begun drafting an environmental impact statement (EIS) needed to start the process.

The EIS will evaluate a "range of alternatives that the agency can take as it works to update the rules", the APHIS explained. "The notice also invites the public to comment on the range of alternatives that APHIS will study in the draft EIS, along with definitions that APHIS plans to use in the draft EIS."

The rules in question were originally developed by the APHIS in 1987 to govern the introduction, importation, interstate movement and field-testing of GM plants. The agency has long been suggesting that they are in need of updating. The APHIS issued a proposal in late 2008, indicating that it would expand the scope of GMOs under its regulatory regime and revamp the permitting system. But the effort stalled and last March the APHIS officially announced that it had abandoned the plan and was keen to start anew.

The agency says that it is keen to update its rules to "reflect lessons learned" since 1987 as well as advances in biotechnology and input from stakeholders.

The proposed revisions aim to "align the range of risks that may be considered under APHIS' biotechnology regulations with both the plant pest and noxious weed authorities of the Plant Protection Act, to ensure a high level of plant health protection, improve regulatory processes so that they are more transparent to stakeholders and the public, and provide regulatory relief so that unnecessary regulatory burdens are eliminated", the agency points out. The update will "increase the

efficiency and precision of our regulations", the APHIS adds.

The move is likely to please industry groups, which have long clamoured for the rules to be overhauled, driven by frustration over time and cost of the agency's reviews.

A top agency official told stakeholders last year, however, that they should not expect rapid changes. "Let's be real about when we can expect a final rule done," Mike Firko, APHIS deputy administrator for Biotechnology Regulatory Services said at a meeting last November. "It is going to be three or four years at best."

Dr Firko also suggested that the agency was keen to see a "new trigger" for its regulatory authority. Under the current rules, GM crops are considered regulated until the APHIS concludes that they are not a plant pest risk or a noxious weed. It is a "regulate first and analyse later" approach that is largely triggered by the use of a plant pest to transform another plant, Dr Firko told stakeholders, adding that the agency would regulate "only with documented risk".

The APHIS notice is expected to be officially published in the Federal Register on February 5th.

The rule revision is independent of the larger effort by the Obama Administration to overhaul the Co-ordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology, the broad regulatory structure that crosses the USDA, the US EPA, the FDA and other federal agencies. Last week, the White House said that it would hold a second public meeting on that effort on March 9th at the EPA's Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas. (Pesticide & Chemical Policy/AGROW, February 4, 2016)

MONSANTO: WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ZIKA VIRUS, NEITHER DOES GLYPHOSATE

You may have seen misinformation and rumors on social media regarding Monsanto, the Zika virus and microcephaly. Unfortunately, this misinformation causes unwarranted fear and distracts from the health crisis at hand and how you can take steps to protect you and your family, writes Monsanto on its Beyond The Rows blog.

Here are some facts (According to Monsanto):

- Neither Monsanto nor our products have any connection to the Zika virus or microcephaly.
- Monsanto does not manufacture or sell Pyriproxyfen.
- Monsanto does not own Sumitomo Chemical Company. However, Sumitomo Chemical Company is one of our business partners in the area of crop protection.
- Glyphosate is not connected in any way to the Zika virus or microcephaly.
- GMOs have no role in the Zika virus or microcephaly.

The Zika virus is a tragic and critical health issue. Dealing effectively with such an important health threat requires a focus on the facts. As a science-based company working to help meet some of the world's biggest challenges we support all efforts to combat this health crisis. We hope all efforts will be taken based on the facts, not rumors.(CropLife February 18, 2016) <http://www.croplife.com/crop-inputs/monsanto-we-have-nothing-to-do-with-zika-virus-neither-does-glyphosate/>

CEU Meetings

Date: March 23, 2016

Title: Target Oklahoma Workshop Bed Bug 2016

Location: Midwest City OK

Contact: Jennifer Gonzalez (800) 352-3870

Course #: OK-16-055

www.target-specialty.com

CEU's: Category(s):

5 7A

5 10

Date: March 23, 2016

Title: Target Oklahoma Workshop General Pest 2016

Location: Midwest City OK

Contact: Jennifer Gonzalez (800) 352-3870

Course #: OK-16-054

www.target-specialty.com

CEU's: Category(s):

1 1A

1 3A

1 3B

1 3C

4 7A

3 7B

6 10

Date: March 31, 2016

Title: 2016 CSE Recertification Seminar

Location: Salina KS

Contact: Kat Benton (785) 827-8215

Course #: OK-16-

www.centrlse.com

CEU's: Category(s):

8 7C

8 10

ODAFF Approved Online CEU Course Links

Technical Learning College

<http://www.abctlc.com/>

Green Applicator Training

<http://www.greenapplicator.com/training.asp>

All Star Pro Training

www.allstarce.com

Wood Destroying Organism Inspection Course

www.nachi.org/wdocourse.htm

CTN Educational Services Inc

http://ctnedu.com/oklahoma_applicator_enroll.html

Pest Network

<http://www.pestnetwork.com/>

Univar USA

<http://www.pestweb.com/>

Southwest Farm Press Spray Drift Mgmt

<http://www.pentonag.com/nationalsdm>

SW Farm Press Weed Resistance Mgmt in Cotton

<http://www.pentonag.com/CottonWRM>

Western Farm Press ABC's of MRLs

<http://www.pentonag.com/mrl>

Western Farm Press Biopesticides Effective Use in Pest Management Programs

<http://www.pentonag.com/biopesticides>

Western Farm Press Principles & Efficient Chemigation

<http://www.pentonag.com/Valmont>

For more information and an updated list of CEU meetings, click on this link:

<http://www.state.ok.us/~okag/cps-ceuhome.htm>

ODAFF Test Information

Pesticide applicator test sessions dates and locations for March/April are as follows:

March		April	
1	Goodwell	8	OKC
10	Hobart	13	Lawton
10	Tulsa	14	Tulsa
11	OKC	22	OKC
24	Tulsa	28	Tulsa
29	OKC		

- Altus: SW Research & Extension Center
16721 US HWY 283
- Atoka: KIAMICHI TECH CENTER 1301
W Liberty Rd, Seminar Center
- Enid: Garfield County Extension Office,
316 E. Oxford.
- Goodwell: Okla. Panhandle Research &
Extension Center, Rt. 1 Box 86M
- Hobart: Kiowa County Extension Center
Courthouse Annex, 302 N. Lincoln
- Lawton: Great Plains Coliseum,
920 S. Sheridan Road.
- McAlester: Kiamichi Tech Center on
Highway 270 W of HWY 69
- OKC: Arcadia Conservation Education
Building 7201 E 33rd St. Edmond
OK (**New Location**)
- Tulsa: NE Campus of Tulsa Community

Pesticide Safety Education Program