



# Sensitivities of three tropical indigenous freshwater invertebrates to single and mixture exposures of diuron and carbofuran and their commercial formulations

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## Abstract

As compared to their temperate counterparts, few toxicity tests have been conducted so far into the evaluation of the sensitivity of indigenous tropical species to pesticides. Especially mixture toxicity assessments appear to be scarce. To contribute to increase our knowledge in this arena, we evaluated the acute toxicity of diuron and carbofuran and their mixtures to the neotropical oligochaetes *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus*, and the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa*. Tests were performed with both the pure active ingredients, as well as their formulated products. The toxicity of the latter to the three test organisms was generally greater than that of the pure active ingredients, although absolute differences were rather small. The sensitivity of the indigenous species was slightly greater than temperate test species from the same taxonomic groups. The concentration addition conceptual model best described the results of the mixture toxicity data. Derived deviations of this model appeared to be dependent on the test organism and as to whether the pesticides were applied as active ingredients or their commercial products. Reported field concentrations of the two pesticides indicate risks to freshwater biota, especially if they are both present. The test species used in the present study are concluded to be suitable candidates as surrogate test organisms in local pesticide risk evaluations.

**Keywords** Aquatic ecotoxicology · Acute toxicity · Pesticide mixtures · Tropics · Oligochaete · Ostracod

## Introduction

While the agricultural soil is the primary recipient for pesticides, water bodies adjacent to crop areas are usually the

ultimate recipient (Pereira et al. 2009). When compared to their temperate counterparts, edge-of-field water bodies in tropical agroecosystems have often been reported to be especially prone to pesticide contamination through runoff resulting from intensive irrigation practices and tropical rainfall (Daam and Van den Brink 2010; Lewis et al. 2016; Novelli et al. 2016). Furthermore, pesticides are often applied in close proximity to water bodies surrounding agricultural fields, resulting in relatively high levels of spray drift (Daam and Van den Brink 2010; Sanchez-Bayo and Hyne 2011).

Diuron and carbofuran are among the mostly intensively used pesticides for a wide variety of crops in Brazil (Mansano et al. 2016a). Diuron is a phenylurea herbicide that inhibits photosynthesis by blocking the electron transport chain at the photosystem II (PSII) in microorganisms and photosynthetic plants (Giacomazzi and Cochet 2004; Mansano et al. 2017). Due to its high persistence, diuron may persist in the sediment and water of contaminated aquatic environments (Field et al. 2003). Carbofuran, in

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turn, is a carbamate insecticide, acaricide, and nematicide that acts against different organisms by binding to the enzyme acetylcholinesterase, inhibiting its action on acetylcholine (Moreira et al. 2015; Pessoa et al. 2011). After its application, carbofuran may be transported to a great extent from the soil to adjacent water bodies after rain events due to its high solubility and low water organic carbon sorption coefficient (Koc) levels (Ribeiro et al. 2013). Given their pesticide properties and intensive usage, several studies have indeed reported the joint occurrence of diuron and carbofuran in aquatic ecosystems in Brazil (e.g., Carbo et al. 2008; Souza 2006) and elsewhere (Bacigalupo and Meroni 2007; Faggiano et al. 2010; Masiá et al. 2015).

Regulation of the use of pesticides and characterization of their risks are usually based on studies focusing mainly on the sensitivity of a range of species representative of different trophic levels to a single chemical. In natural environments, however, organisms are constantly exposed to complex mixtures of pesticides with varying constituents in different concentrations and ratios, which may lead to additive effects or produce synergistic or antagonistic effects (Cedergreen et al. 2008; Faust et al. 2003; Mansano et al. 2017). In addition, most available studies into mixture toxicity often only evaluated the toxicity of active ingredients of pesticides, whereas commercial pesticide formulations also include surfactants and other so-called inert ingredients, which may also contribute significantly to the overall toxicity (Cedergreen and Streibig 2005; Moreira et al. 2017; Solomon and Thompson 2003).

Most available toxicity studies evaluating diuron and carbofuran have been conducted with single exposures using test species belonging to temperate regions (Mansano et al. 2016b). The relatively low availability of toxicity data for tropical species has indeed often been discussed (e.g., Daam and Van den Brink 2010; Moreira et al. 2017; Rico et al. 2011). Especially studies evaluating pesticide mixtures with tropical species are still scarce (Moreira et al. 2017; Sanches et al. 2017). A previous study conducted in our laboratory already evaluated the toxicity of both compounds individually to the neotropical cladoceran *Ceriodaphnia silvestrii* (Mansano et al. 2016b). A comparison with available literature toxicity data indicated that this species was generally the most sensitive species to both compounds and hence more sensitive than the standard test species generally used in temperate regions such as *Daphnia magna* (Mansano et al. 2016b). The toxicity of these compounds to the microalgae *Raphidocelis subcapitata* was subsequently also evaluated both individually and as a mixture in our laboratory (Mansano et al. 2017). In general, this study indicated the occurrence of synergism in the mixtures of these compounds, especially when diuron was the dominant chemical in the combinations (Mansano et al. 2017).

Aiming to contribute to increase our knowledge in pesticide mixture toxicity to tropical species, the acute toxicity of diuron and carbofuran and their commercial formulations (Diuron Nortox® 500 SC and Furadan® 350 SC), in both single and mixture exposures, was evaluated for the indigenous oligochaete species *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus*, and for the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa*.

Freshwater oligochaetes live on sediments and feed on decaying organic matter in most aquatic habitats, playing a substantial role in decomposition (Benbow 2009). Ostracods, although mainly epibenthic, also thrive in the water column and periphytic habitats feeding on both living and detrital suspended particles, including alga or, in the case of carnivory ostracods, other invertebrates (Rossetti et al. 2006). The use of oligochaetes as test species in ecotoxicity testing has frequently been recommended since (i) they are keystone species in aquatic ecosystems; (ii) they can be easily cultured in laboratory conditions; and (iii) they can be exposed to toxic substances through food and body contact with sediment, interstitial water, and water columns (Chapman 2001; EFSA 2013; Smith et al. 1991; Corbi et al. 2015). Similarly, ostracods have also been considered functionally important components of aquatic ecosystems. They feed on many, and may demonstrate a similar or higher sensitivity to pesticides than aquatic species from other taxonomic groups (e.g., Lawrence et al. 2002; Ruiz et al. 2013; Pereira et al. 2017). Despite this, relatively few toxicity data are currently available for oligochaetes and ostracods (Daam et al. 2013; Lobo et al. 2016; Ruiz et al. 2013). The species selected for the present investigation. Subsequently, the specific aims of the present studies were (i) to increase the tropical toxicity dataset with acute toxicity threshold values of diuron and carbofuran for two tropical oligochaetes and an ostracod; (ii) to compare these with toxicity data available for temperate species; (iii) to study the toxicity of mixtures of these two compounds to the species tested, and (iv) to evaluate whether single and mixture toxicity is different between the active ingredients and formulated products of these pesticides.

## Materials and methods

### Test organism and culture conditions

Individuals of *A. inaequalis* Stephenson, 1911 (Oligochaeta: Naididae) were obtained from laboratory cultures at the Hydraulics and Sanitation Department of the University of São Paulo and cultivated in the Ecotoxicology Laboratory Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology of the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar). Individuals of *Dero furcatus* (Oligochaeta: Naididae) were obtained from experimental tanks located at the

Aquaculture Station of the Hydrobiology Department of UFSCar and for *S. trispinosa* (Crustacea: Cyprididae) individuals were collected from concrete tanks at the Experimental Station on the campus of UFSCar.

Test organisms were kept in  $25 \times 30 \text{ cm}^2$  new plastic trays containing 1 kg of artificial sterilized sediment acquired from a local aquarium store (oligochaetes) or on decomposing leaves of a local *Eucalyptus* tree (ostracod). Organisms were acclimatized to laboratory test conditions during 4 months for Oligochaeta and 1 week for Ostracoda according to the OECD protocol for Bioaccumulation in Sediment-dwelling Benthic Oligochaetes (OECD 2008). This protocol was also followed for the ostracod *S. trispinosa* due to the inexistence of a specific protocol for this species. The oligochaetes were fed once a week with 20 mL Tetramin® fish feed solution containing 5 g Tetramin® in 2 L distilled water. Cultures were kept under controlled photoperiod (16 light:8 dark) and temperature ( $22 \pm 2^\circ \text{C}$ ) in reconstituted water. Dissolved oxygen and temperature, pH, water conductivity, and water hardness were measured as recommended by the OECD Guidelines for the Testing of Chemicals (OECD 2008) at the beginning and at the end of the tests.

### Chemicals, test solutions, and chemical analysis

Carbofuran (Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), number 1563-66-2) and diuron (CAS number 330-54-1), both compounds with high purity ( $\geq 98\%$ , analytical standard), were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. The commercial formulations used were Furadan® 350 SC (purchased from FMC, Brazil), which contains 35% m/v active ingredient (carbofuran) and 65% m/v inert ingredients, and Diuron Nortox® 500 SC (purchased from Nortox S/A, Brazil), which is composed of 50% m/v active ingredient (diuron) and 69.4% m/v inert ingredients. The stock solutions of commercial carbofuran (100 mg active ingredient (a.i.)  $\text{L}^{-1}$ ), technical carbofuran (100 mg a.i.  $\text{L}^{-1}$ ), and commercial diuron (100 mg a.i.  $\text{L}^{-1}$ ) were prepared immediately prior to the toxicity tests through the dilution of a predetermined amount of each compound in distilled water. The analytical standard of diuron was first dissolved in analytical-grade acetone ( $\text{C}_3\text{H}_6\text{O}$ ; LabSynth) due to its low solubility in water ( $42 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$  at  $20^\circ \text{C}$ ; Giacomazzi and Cochet 2004). The nominal test concentrations were subsequently obtained by dilution of the stock solution with the culture medium (reconstituted water) of the test organisms.

To confirm the nominal concentrations used in the tests, stock solutions were quantified using an Agilent Technologies series 1200 high-performance liquid chromatograph (Waldbronn, Germany), equipped with a diode array detector. The analytical methods were the same as those described in detail by Mansano et al. (2017).

### Acute toxicity tests: isolated compounds and their mixtures

The toxicity tests followed the protocols issued by OECD (OECD 2008) and the procedures described in Corbi et al. (2015). In each acute toxicity test under static conditions (96-h exposure for *A. inaequalis* and *D. furcatus*; 48 h for *S. trispinosa* without test solution renewal), evaluating the individual active ingredients and commercial products, four replicates were used for each pesticide treatment. Each replicate consisted of a nontoxic polypropylene plastic cup containing five young adult individuals (average size:  $7.8 \pm 0.37 \text{ mm}$ —*A. inaequalis*;  $7.0 \pm 0.21 \text{ mm}$ —*D. furcatus*;  $0.93 \pm 0.083 \text{ mm}$ —*S. trispinosa*) in 10 mL test solution. At least five test concentrations of each compound were evaluated, in addition to the control (and a solvent control containing 0.2% v/v acetone in the test evaluating the standard diuron solution). To certify the reproducibility of the toxicity values and take the variability of the results into account, five definitive acute toxicity tests were performed for both compounds (diuron and carbofuran) and dosing form (commercial product and active ingredient).

The test concentrations evaluated for each compound were established by conducting preliminary range-finding tests, resulting in the nominal concentration ranges provided below. Although the ranges for the active ingredients and their respective formulated products differed in some cases (as indicated by the results of the preliminary tests), the test concentrations in overlapping parts of these ranges were the same, as follows (all test concentrations evaluated in the tests are provided in Table S1 of the Supplementary Material)

*Dero furcatus*: 62.5 to 4000  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient carbofuran and its formulated product Furadan® 350 SC; 2 to 64  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient diuron and 1 to 32  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for its formulated product Diuron Nortox® 500 SC.

*Allonais inaequalis*: 62.5 to 4000  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient carbofuran and 500 to 32,000  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for its formulated product; 2 to 64  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient diuron and 1 to 32  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for its formulated product.

*Strispinosa trispinosa*: 15.6 to 250  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient carbofuran and 15.6 to 250  $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  for its formulated product; 8 to 32  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for the active ingredient diuron and 1 to 32  $\text{mg L}^{-1}$  for its formulated product.

The experiments were conducted in a laboratory maintained at a temperature of  $25 \pm 1^\circ \text{C}$ , in darkness, and animals were not fed during the tests. Effects of the treatments were evaluated after 48 and 96 h for *A. inaequalis* and *D. furcatus* and only after 48 h for *S. trispinosa*. To this end, the individuals were observed under a stereomicroscope and the number of immobile organisms was counted and used to calculate the median effect concentration (96-h half-

maximal effective concentration ( $EC_{50}$ ) for *A. inaequalis* and *D. furcatus* and 48 h  $EC_{50}$  for *S. trispinosa*). Water quality parameters (temperature, water hardness, electrical conductivity, and pH) were also measured at the start and at the end of each toxicity tests. In order to evaluate the combined effects of the pesticides, tests in which individuals were exposed to each pesticide compound individually and tests evaluating combinations of these compounds were conducted simultaneously through a factorial design for binary toxicity to be determined. Stock solution preparation, test conditions, and parameters analyzed were the same as those described above for the single compound exposure tests.

In addition to the single and mixture toxicity tests, the organisms were also tested monthly with the reference substance copper sulfate ( $CuSO_4$ ). This was done in order to certify the health conditions of the tested Oligochaeta and Ostracoda and hence the validity of the toxicity tests. Reference tests were conducted in the same way as the single and mixture toxicity tests, except for the fact that no sediment was used in the reference tests.

### Species sensitivity distribution

Log normal curves representing species sensitivities distribution were plotted to compare the  $EC_{50}$  values obtained from acute toxicity data of diuron and carbofuran active ingredients. Data obtained in this study for the oligochaetes *A. inaequalis* and *D. furcatus* and for the ostracod *S. trispinosa* were compared with a set of species of algae and with a selection of invertebrate species belonging to several different taxonomic groups and trophic levels. Toxicity data for algae were compiled from available literature and from the US-EPA ECOTOX database (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/ecotox/>) supplemented with data from the open literature and the draft assessment reports of diuron and carbofuran (EC 2004a, b) for taxa not found in the database. Only data from laboratory tests conducted at the same temperature (25°C), test duration (96 or 48 h duration), and endpoint (mortality/immobility) as our tests and that could be confirmed from original publications were included in SSDs. When more than one toxicity value attending those criteria were available for a given species, the geometric mean value was used. Log-normality at the 5% level was tested with the Anderson–Darling test included in the ETX computer program version 2.0 (Van Vlaardingen et al. 2004).

### Data analysis

The 96-h  $EC_{50}$  values with their 95% confidence intervals for the acute toxicity tests were calculated by nonlinear regression through the three-parameter logistic curve in the Statistica 7.0 software (StatSoft 2004). Data were first

checked for normality ( $\chi^2$  test) and homogeneity of variances (Bartlett's test). Significant differences between toxicity values derived for the active ingredients and commercial products were verified by Student's *t* test. The difference was considered significant when  $p \leq 0.05$ . All statistical analyses were performed using Sigmaplot 11.0 software (Systat 2008).

Data from the mixture toxicity tests were analyzed by comparing the observed data with the expected combined effects from concentration addition (CA) and independent action (IA) reference models using the MIXTOX tool (Jonker et al. 2005). In the following step of data analysis, the CA model was extended as recommended by Jonker et al. (2005) and deviation functions, such as synergistic/antagonistic interactions, dose-ratio-dependent and dose-level-dependent deviations were modeled by the addition of the parameters “*a*” and “*b*.” The parameter “*a*” becomes negative or positive, in case of a synergism or antagonism deviation, respectively. In case of a dose-ratio-dependent deviation (DR), the value of the parameter “ $b_{DR}$ ” in addition to the parameter “*a*” indicate that the deviation from the reference model is controlled by the mixture composition. The parameter “ $b_{DL}$ ” is included in addition to “*a*” in the case of dose-level-dependent deviation (DL). In this deviation function, the value of “*a*” indicates the deviation at low doses (i.e.,  $a > 0$  = antagonism, and  $a < 0$  = synergism) and the value of “ $b_{DL}$ ” indicates at which dose level there is a change in deviation (i.e.,  $b_{DL} > 1$  = at doses  $< LC_{50}$  (median lethal concentration),  $b_{DL} = 1$  at doses  $= LC_{50}$ , and  $0 < b_{DL} < 1$  = at doses  $> LC_{50}$ ; Jonker et al. 2005).

Data were fitted to conceptual models and deviations, and the best fit was chosen by the maximum likelihood method. Where a statistically more descriptive deviation model was identified, the effect pattern was deduced directly from the parameter values and the maximum deviation was calculated in terms of effect level (Freitas et al. 2014; Jonker et al. 2005).

## Results and discussion

### Test performance

During all acute toxicity tests with each individual pesticide and their mixtures the measured pH of test solutions remained within the range of 7.2 and 7.8 and did not vary by more than 0.5 units in any given test. Water temperature in all toxicity tests varied between 22.8 and 24.8 °C; electrical conductivity ranged from 453.4 to 480.7  $\mu S\ cm^{-1}$  and water hardness varied between 182 and 197  $mg\ CaCO_3\ L^{-1}$ . Survival rates  $> 90\%$  were observed in the control treatments at the end of all toxicity tests. In the single and mixture experiments with the active ingredient diuron, no significant



difference between the control and solvent control was noted, excluding the possibility of solvent effects (0.01% acetone) on the toxicity test results. Therefore, all validation criteria established by OECD (2008) were met.

The mean effective concentrations (96-h  $LC_{50}$ ) and their 95% confidence limits for the reference substance  $CuSO_4$  were 0.02575 (0.0234–0.0281)  $mg\ L^{-1}$  for *A. inaequalis*, 0.0314 (0.025–0.0378)  $mg\ L^{-1}$  for *D. furcatus* and 0.7549  $mg\ L^{-1}$  (0.1424–1.3674) for *S. trispinosa*. To the best of our knowledge, no toxicity data of  $CuSO_4$  are available for the three test species (nor any other species belonging to the same genus). Subsequently, the  $CuSO_4$  toxicity data obtained in our study may serve as first reference values for future studies testing these species.

Measurements of diuron and carbofuran concentrations in stock solutions used in the toxicity tests showed that differences among intended and nominal concentrations were lower than 10% (mean  $\pm$  SD:  $97 \pm 7\%$ ). Therefore, all threshold and mixture toxicity calculations were made using nominal concentrations without correction for analytical recovery as suggested by ISO (2000).

### Toxicity tests with individual compounds

Regarding the acute toxicity tests for the three test organisms, the mean 48-h  $LC_{50}$  and 96-h  $LC_{50}$  values obtained for diuron and carbofuran (active ingredients and commercial formulations) and their respective 95% confidence intervals are shown in Table 1. The toxicity of the commercial formulations was significantly greater than the active ingredients in all cases except for the test evaluating the toxicity of carbofuran (standard and commercial) to the ostracod *S. trispinosa*. In the latter case, the active ingredient carbofuran was more toxic than its commercial formulation ( $p < 0.05$ ). In line with our findings, previous studies demonstrating differences in toxicity of active ingredients and their formulated products indicated that in the majority of cases the toxicity of the formulated product

was greater than that of the active ingredient (e.g., Beggel et al. 2010; Mullin 2015; Pereira et al. 2009). It should also be noted that, although statistically significant, absolute differences in the toxicity values between the active ingredients and the formulated products were rather small (Table 1).

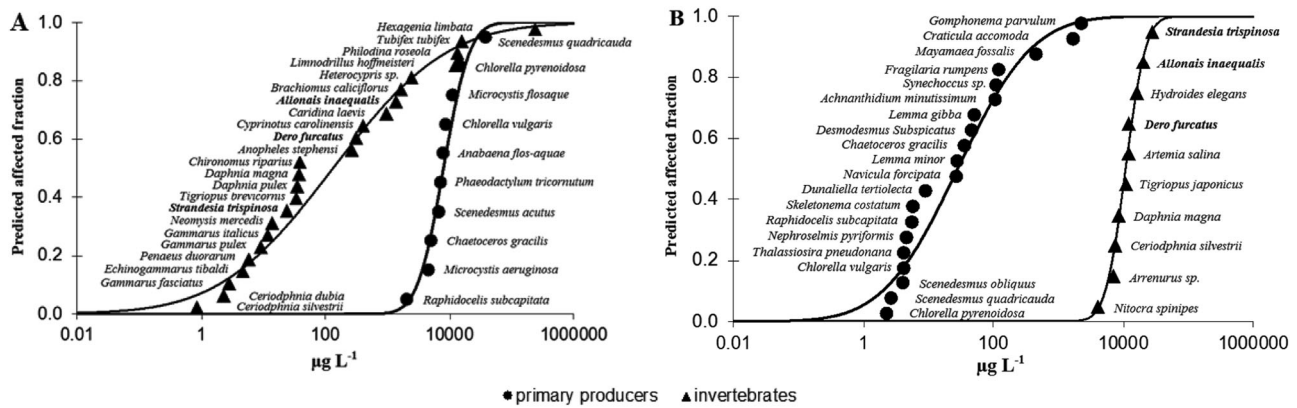
The  $LC_{50}$  values shown in this Table 1 indicate that carbofuran was one to three orders of magnitude more toxic than diuron to the invertebrates tested. Given their insecticidal and herbicidal types of action, respectively, this was indeed in line with what could be anticipated a priori (e.g., Maltby et al. 2005; Sanchez-Bayo and Hyne 2011). Diuron is a photosynthesis inhibitor, so its main activity is on autotrophic organisms (algae and macrophytes; Van den Brink et al. 2006). Although it has been recognized that diuron may cause toxic effects on heterotrophic non-target organisms through different modes of action (e.g., *Acetylcholinesterase* inhibition, endocrine disruption activity), a specific mode of action of diuron in invertebrates remains unclear (Mansano et al. 2016a, b; Nebeker and Schuytema 1998).

In line with the above, the SSDs indicate that primary producers are less sensitive than invertebrates to carbofuran (Fig. 1a) and more sensitive than invertebrates to diuron (Fig. 1b). The three species tested for diuron in the present study were also among the most insensitive invertebrates included in the species assemblage (Fig. 1b). The most important reason that diuron was evaluated individually in the present study, however, was to enable establishing its toxicity in the mixture with carbofuran. For risk assessment purposes, primary producer toxicity data will evidently need to be used in case of the evaluation of herbicides like diuron. Regarding carbofuran, especially cladocerans (*Ceriodaphnia silvestrii* and *C. dubia*) and amphipods (three *Gammarus* spp. and *Echinogammarus tibaldii*) appear to be the most sensitive organism groups (Fig. 1a). The oligochaetes evaluated in this study appeared to have medium to low sensitivity. In line with this, laboratory and

**Table 1** Mean (and 95% confidence intervals)  $LC_{50}$  values from the five acute toxicity tests with the pesticides tested as obtained for the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa*, and the oligochaetes *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus*

Compounds tested	<i>S. trispinosa</i> 48-h $LC_{50}$ (mg a.i. $L^{-1}$ )	<i>A. inaequalis</i> 96-h $LC_{50}$ (mg a.i. $L^{-1}$ )	<i>D. furcatus</i> 96-h $LC_{50}$ (mg a.i. $L^{-1}$ )
Carbofuran (pure active ingredient)	0.024 (0.021–0.028)	1.382 (1.281–1.482)	0.314 (0.279–0.349)
Carbofuran (Furadan® 350 SC)	0.041 (0.031–0.050)	1.248 (1.209–1.287)	0.253 (0.232–0.274)
Diuron (pure active ingredient)	27.902 (16.064–39.741)	20.277 (19.505–21.04)	12.180 (11.575–12.784)
Diuron (Diuron Nortox® 500 SC)	10.479 (9.174–11.785)	15.524 (14.938–16.109)	4.611 (4.421–4.800)

$LC_{50}$  median lethal concentration, a.i. active ingredient



**Fig. 1** Species sensitivity distributions (SSDs) constructed based on (geometric mean) 48-h EC<sub>50</sub> values for carbofuran (**a**) and diuron (**b**) obtained in the present study for *Allonais inaequalis*, *Dero furcatus*,

and *Strandesia trispinosa* (in bold), supplemented with data for other species from the US-EPA database (<https://cfpub.epa.gov/ecotox/>). SSD curves were constructed as described in Vasconcelos et al. (2016)

model ecosystem studies have indicated that cladocerans and amphipods are among the most sensitive taxonomic groups to carbamate insecticides, whereas annelids appear less sensitive (Rico and Van den Brink 2015 and references therein). On the other hand, the indigenous oligochaete species tested in the present study are more sensitive to carbofuran than the other oligochaetes for which toxicity data could be derived (*Limnodrilus hoffmeisteri* and *Tubifex tubifex*; Fig. 1a). Similarly, the indigenous ostracod (*S. trispinosa*) also appeared more sensitive than other ostracod species (*Cyprinotus carolinensis* and *Heterocypris* sp). The toxicity values obtained for *S. trispinosa* were even slightly lower than the common standard invertebrate test species *Daphnia magna* and *Chironomus riparius* (EFSA 2013; Fig. 1a). Ostracods have indeed been demonstrated to be sensitive to certain insecticides, such as organophosphates (Rico and Van den Brink 2015) and the neonicotinoid imidacloprid (Daam et al. 2013 and references therein). Although sensitivity comparisons have not demonstrated a consistent greater or lesser sensitivity of tropical species as compared to temperate species, the use of indigenous species in tropical effect assessments has been recommended for several reasons, including (i) a more ecologically relevant assessment of the true sensitivity and subsequently the potential risk of tropical freshwater life, (ii) direct availability and hence less logistic constraints, and (iii) to avoid introducing temperate exotics in tropical ecosystems (Mansano et al. 2016b and references therein).

### Pesticide mixture toxicity

Traditionally, pesticide mixtures with similar modes of action are generally considered to act through CA, whereas the IA model is used for mixtures with pesticides with different modes of action (e.g., Jonker et al. 2005; Loureiro et al. 2010; Moreira et al. 2017). As detailed in the previous

section, the specific mode of action of diuron in invertebrates remains unclear (Mansano et al. 2016a, b; Nebeker and Schuytema 1998). In addition, the CA model has been recommended to be used as the standard toxicity prediction tool in ecological risk assessments since the endpoints are broader in terms of organizational level, and since they focus on individual survival, reproduction output, or growth (Damasceno et al. 2017; EFSA 2014). Subsequently, the phenomenological point of view of similar mode of action states that the concept of CA could be extended to mixture constituents having common apical endpoints or common adverse outcomes (Barata et al. 2012) such as is the case in the present study (i.e., mortality). Although the CA model is generally more conservative than the IA model, the magnitude of the differences at low levels of exposure between the two models is usually small and hence, the outcome will not be overly conservative (EFSA 2013; Nørgaard and Cedergreen 2010). In analyzing the mixture toxicity results obtained from the MIXTOX tool, we concluded that the CA model better described the observed effects for the combinations tested in relation to the IA model. Although both models were statistically significant, the results obtained from the interpretation of the deviations (parameters “a” and “b”) were better explained by the isobolograms produced from the CA model. Data for the results obtained for the IA model are presented as Supplementary Material in Tables S2 and S3 and in Fig. S1, whereas the results of the CA model analysis and deviations encountered for this reference model are provided in Tables 2 and 3 and visualized in Fig. 2. Based on the criteria set by Jonker et al. (2005), which are scrutinized in section “Species sensitivity distribution,” the deviations of the CA model were determined for the tests with the different organisms and compound form (active ingredient and formulated product; Table 4).

**Table 2** Summary of the analysis of the acute toxicity tests with the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa* and oligochaetes *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus* exposed to mixtures of carbofuran and diuron (active ingredients)

	<i>S. trispinosa</i>				<i>A. inaequalis</i>				<i>D. furcatus</i>			
	CA	S/A	DR	DL	CA	S/A	DR	DL	CA	S/A	DR	DL
Max	0.84	0.82	0.83	0.86	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98
$\beta_{\text{carbofuran}}$	2.60	2.15	2.08	1.62	3.41	3.14	3.06	2.14	3.81	3.74	3.66	2.81
$\beta_{\text{diuron}}$	2.79	6.17	5.45	4.27	4.01	4.77	5.03	3.89	2.63	2.70	2.85	1.96
LC <sub>50</sub> to carbofuran	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.04	2.17	1.60	1.76	1.43	0.30	0.27	0.30	0.26
LC <sub>50</sub> to diuron	40.98	35.78	34.15	33.26	37.19	29.61	27.90	27.45	16.90	15.00	13.73	15.07
<i>a</i>	—	1.69	2.75	3.57	—	2.17	3.61	7.03	—	0.90	2.55	4.32
<i>b</i> <sub>DR/DL</sub>	—	—	−3.05	0.28	—	—	−3.20	0.34	—	—	−3.40	0.58
SS	46.89	36.23	33.98	34.32	149.01	114.53	108.31	100.24	66.13	61.63	57.16	49.57
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.83	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.83	0.87	0.88	0.89	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.94
$\chi^2$ test or <i>F</i> test	232.17	10.66	2.25	1.91	735.91	34.49	6.22	14.28	805.57	4.50	4.47	12.06
df	—	1	1	1	—	1	1	1	—	1	1	1
<i>p</i> ( $\chi^2/F$ )	$4.5 \times 10^{-49}$	0.001	0.13	0.17	$5.84 \times 10^{-158}$	$4.29 \times 10^{-9}$	0.013	0.0002	$4.8 \times 10^{-173}$	0.03	0.03	0.0005

Max maximum response value,  $\beta$  slope of the individual dose–response curve, LC<sub>50</sub> median lethal concentration, *a*, *b*<sub>DR</sub>, and *b*<sub>DL</sub> parameters of the function, SS sum of squared residuals, *r*<sup>2</sup> the regression coefficient,  $\chi^2$  or *F* test statistic, df degrees of freedom, *p* ( $\chi^2/F$ ) significance level of the test statistic, IA independent action model, CA concentration addition, S/A synergism or antagonism deviation, DR dose-ratio-dependent deviation, DL dose-level deviation

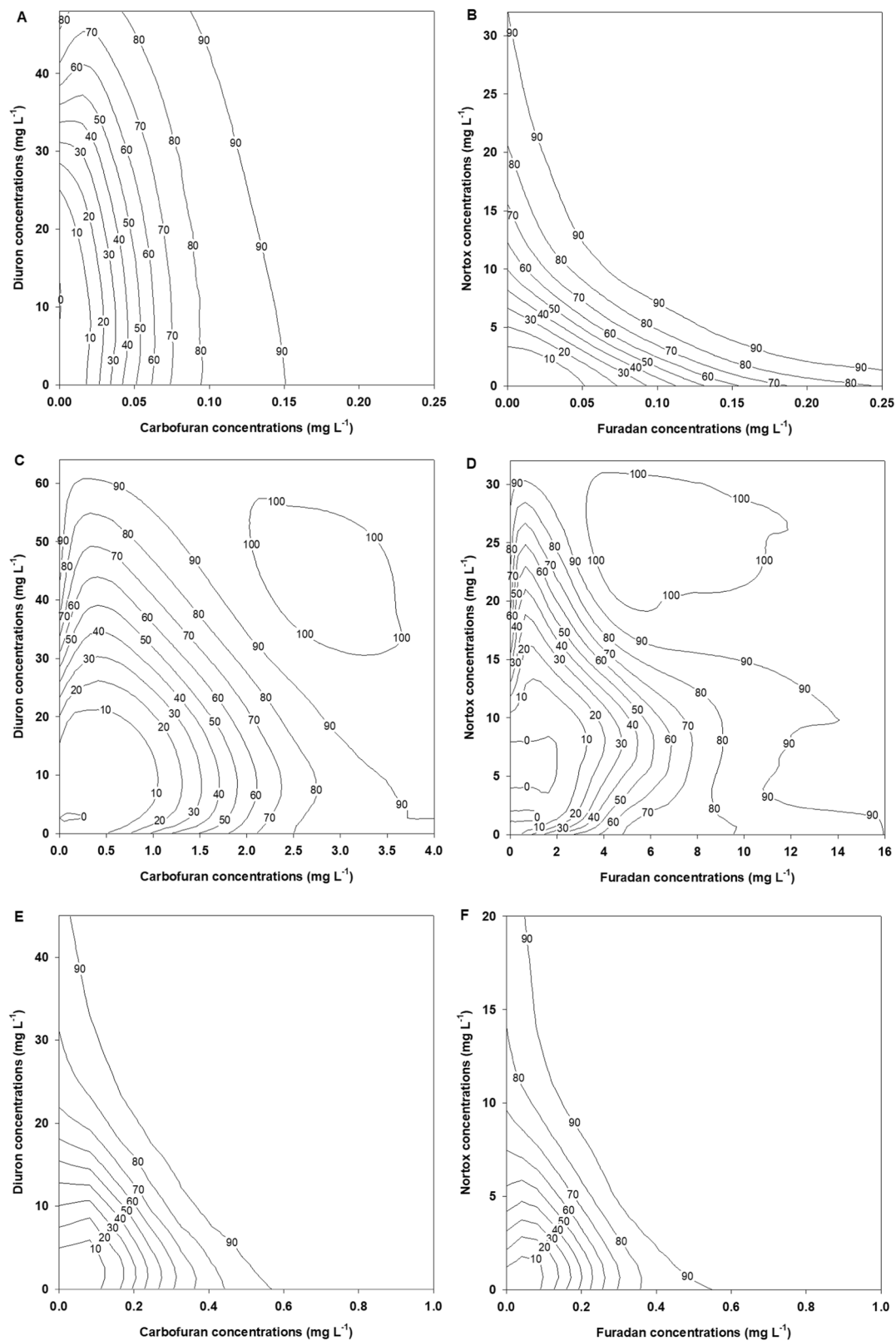
**Table 3** Summary of the analysis of the acute toxicity tests with the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa* and the oligochaetes *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus* exposed to mixtures of carbofuran (as Furadan) and diuron (as Nortox) (commercial products)

	<i>S. trispinosa</i>				<i>A. inaequalis</i>				<i>D. furcatus</i>			
	CA	S/A	DR	DL	CA	S/A	DR	DL	CA	S/A	DR	DL
Max	0.83	0.83	0.82	0.84	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98
$\beta_{\text{furadan}}$	3.20	3.18	3.31	2.34	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.35	3.46	3.49	3.42	2.55
$\beta_{\text{nortox}}$	2.67	2.88	2.86	1.99	7.69	7.69	7.69	4.93	2.03	2.10	2.17	1.45
LC <sub>50</sub> to furadan	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.13	5.75	5.75	5.75	3.56	0.25	0.21	0.22	0.22
LC <sub>50</sub> to nortox	8.92	10.74	11.09	9.99	20.46	20.46	20.46	13.51	6.44	5.58	5.31	5.48
<i>a</i>	—	−1.05	−1.59	2.38	—	0.87	0.30	8.81	—	1.02	1.97	4.90
<i>b</i> <sub>DR/DL</sub>	—	—	1.07	1.46	—	—	1.27	0.31	—	—	−1.82	0.55
SS	62.33	59.43	59.11	54.44	225.68	209.84	208.30	147.91	93.80	89.07	88.13	73.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.83	0.84	0.84	0.85	0.75	0.76	0.77	0.83	0.86	0.87	0.87	0.89
$\chi^2$ test or <i>F</i> test	311.77	2.91	3.22	7.90	663.60	15.83	1.55	61.94	600.69	4.73	0.94	16.06
df	—	1	2	2	—	1	1	1	—	1	1	1
<i>p</i> ( $\chi^2/F$ )	$3.13 \times 10^{-66}$	0.09	0.20	0.02	$2.66 \times 10^{-142}$	$6.92 \times 10^{-5}$	0.21	$3.55 \times 10^{-15}$	$1.1 \times 10^{-128}$	0.03	0.33	$6.1 \times 10^{-5}$

max maximum response value,  $\beta$  slope of the individual dose–response curve, LC<sub>50</sub> median lethal concentration, *a*, *b*<sub>DR</sub>, and *b*<sub>DL</sub> parameters of the function, SS sum of squared residuals, *r*<sup>2</sup> regression coefficient,  $\chi^2$  test or *F* test statistic, df degrees of freedom, *p* ( $\chi^2/F$ ) significance level of the test statistic, IA independent action model, CA concentration addition, S/A synergism or antagonism deviation, DR dose-ratio-dependent deviation, DL dose-level deviation

As can be deduced from Tables 2 through 4 and Fig. 2, different deviations from the CA model were obtained for the different test species. In the test with the ostracod *S. trispinosa* exposed to the mixture of the active ingredients, an antagonistic deviation of the CA model was encountered (Table 4). In the other mixture toxicity tests, however, a dose-level-dependent deviation could be deduced, although

the dose level in relation to the LC<sub>50</sub> value at which the deviation (antagonism, synergism) is expected to change differs (Table 4). Previous studies have demonstrated that PSII inhibitors such as diuron can alter the toxicity of insecticides in heterotrophs by interacting with the cytochrome P450 systems activity resulting in altered insecticide metabolism (e.g., Cedergreen 2014; Pérez et al. 2013,



**Fig. 2** Isobolograms of the effects of the mixtures of the pesticides carbofuran and diuron (a, c, e: active ingredients) and Furadan and Nortox (b, d, f: commercial formulations) on the survival of *Strandesia trispinosa* (a, b), *Allonais inaequalis* (c, d) and *Dero furcatus* (e, f).

Linear, concave (numbers within the isoboles <1) and convex (numbers within the isoboles >1) isoboles in isobolograms represent no interaction, synergy, and antagonism, respectively (Ryall and Tan 2015)



**Table 4** Summary of the deviations of the CA model that best fit the data of the toxicity tests with the ostracod *Strandesia trispinosa* and oligochaetes *Allonais inaequalis* and *Dero furcatus* exposed to mixtures of carbofuran and diuron and their commercial products

Species	Active ingredient	Formulated product
<i>Strandesia trispinosa</i>	Antagonism	DL—antagonism at low doses, synergism at higher (<LC <sub>50</sub> ) doses
<i>Allonais inaequalis</i>	DL—antagonism at low doses, synergism at higher (>LC <sub>50</sub> ) doses	DL—antagonism at low doses, synergism at higher (>LC <sub>50</sub> ) doses
<i>Dero furcatus</i>	DL—antagonism at low doses, synergism at higher (>LC <sub>50</sub> ) doses	DL—antagonism at low doses, synergism at higher (>LC <sub>50</sub> ) doses

DL dose-level deviation, LC<sub>50</sub> median lethal concentration, CA concentration addition

2017). Since such systems differ between organisms, results obtained on the interaction of a certain binary mixture for a test organism cannot be extrapolated to other organisms, and therefore being species-specific (Liu et al. 2013). Toxicokinetic-toxicodynamic models are increasingly used in the analysis of toxicity data for single-chemical exposure (e.g., EFSA 2013). However, models of this type are also absolutely essential for a more mechanistic understanding of mixture ecotoxicology in different organisms (Jager et al. 2014). For the ostracod *S. trispinosa*, the mixture CA deviation was slightly different between the tests conducted with the active ingredients and commercial products (Table 4). At present, limited knowledge is available concerning mixture effects of pesticide formulation additives, active substances, and their transformation products (e.g., Altenburger et al. 2013; Coors et al. 2014; Moreira et al. 2017). Subsequently, future studies should also consider the influence of the “inert” ingredients in pesticide formulations on the mixture toxicity effects and mechanisms to aquatic organisms.

### Implications for risk assessment and concluding remarks

Given their physical–chemical properties (e.g., high aquatic DT<sub>50</sub>, low K<sub>oc</sub>), diuron and carbofuran have a great potential to be present simultaneously in edge-of-field water bodies (e.g., Field et al. 2003; Ribeiro et al. 2013). Studies carried out in Brazil (e.g., Carbo et al. 2008; Souza 2006) and in other places worldwide (Bacigalupo and Meroni 2007; Faggiano et al. 2010; Masiá et al. 2015) have indeed reported the joint occurrence of diuron and carbofuran in aquatic ecosystems. Reported carbofuran concentrations range from 0.1 to 69 µg L<sup>-1</sup> (Caldas et al. 2011; Carbo et al. 2008; Loro et al. 2015; Ribeiro et al. 2013), whereas maximum diuron field concentrations vary from 0.9 to 408 µg L<sup>-1</sup> (Britto et al. 2012; Dantas et al. 2011; Dores et al. 2009; Paschoalato et al. 2008).

Also considering the reported field concentrations of diuron and carbofuran, the indigenous species of oligochaetes and ostracod used as test organisms in this study

appeared to be sensitive representatives of their taxonomic groups (Fig. 1). In addition, these organisms are functionally important components of aquatic food webs and no logistic constraints were encountered during our tests. For these reasons, oligochaetes have previously been recommended and adopted as model test species for evaluating waterborne and sediment pesticide toxicity evaluations (e.g., EFSA 2013, 2015). Subsequently, the test species used in the present study are concluded to be suitable candidates as surrogate test organisms in tropical pesticide risk evaluations.

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### Compliance with ethical standards

**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval** All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals were followed. This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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