

Storage and Retrieval of Information on Pesticides Registered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act

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The Pesticides Regulation Division is responsible for the enforcement of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. This Act requires that all economic poisons (pesticides) be registered with the U. S. Department of Agriculture prior to shipment in interstate commerce. Both imports and exports of pesticides are subject to the requirements of this Act. The Division has developed regulations for the enforcement of this Act and also interpretations of these regulations, copies of which are available upon request. Pesticides (defined in the Act as economic poisons) include insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, herbicides, plant growth regulators, algacides, desiccants, defoliants, nematocides, and animal and bird poisons and repellants.

An application for the registration of a pesticide must be accompanied by a proposed label bearing certain information specified in the Act, regulations and interpretations and by data showing that the product can be used safely, and effectively, and will not result in illegal residues in or on raw agricultural commodities. It is the purpose of this brief discussion to describe the manner in which the Division "stores" this information and to point out some examples of why we have to retrieve this information from time to time. When an application for registration is received by the Division, the application, label, and data are attached to a "Registration Jacket" and the jacket is routed to the various Chief Staff Officers, depending upon the type of product. Insecticides are routed to the Chief Staff Officer, Entomology; herbicides to the Chief Staff Officer, Plant Biology; and so on.

On each registration jacket there is a block marked CODE and in this block appear the following designations: Pesticides, Formulation, Category Toxicity, Uses, Ingredients, and Data Coded. The Chief Staff Officers will fill in the space marked "Pesticide" with a number which designates the type of pesticide (insecticide, fungicide, etc.) and in the space marked "Formulation" with a number which indicates the type of formulation (Dust, Wettable Powder, Emulsifiable Concentrate, etc.). In the space marked "Use" will be placed a number designating the type of use.

When the registration file is received by the Pharmacology Section, the pharmacologist will insert a number in the space marked "Category Toxicity" which, as the name denotes, designates the toxicity category.

The Chemistry Section will fill in the space under "ingredient" with numbers which have been assigned to all pesticide chemicals that are listed in the ingredient statement as active ingredients. At the present time inert ingredients are not coded.

When the Chemistry Section forwards the registration file to the Registration Section, the coded pesticide

information on the jacket is then transferred to a form entitled "Pesticide Chemicals Registered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act" by a coding clerk. In addition to the numbers which appear on the jacket, the coding clerk will include on this form certain other information including the name and address of the manufacturer of the product, registration number, and registration date.

This form is forwarded to the Data Processing Unit of the Agricultural Research Service where the coded pesticide information is then transferred to an IBM card and these cards are then held in readiness for information request from the Division.

The Division's most frequent use of this coded pesticide information is in connection with its five-year reregistration activities. Registration of a product under the Act is effective for a period of five years after which registration may be renewed for an additional five-year period or it may be cancelled, depending upon the desire of the registrant. There are approximately 60,000 products registered and every 90 days a survey is made of the products for which the five-year registration period has expired. The registrants of these products are so notified, and unless they indicate that they desire that registration be extended for an additional five-year period the registration is cancelled.

When the Food and Drug Administration finds it necessary to reduce or cancel a tolerance for a pesticide chemical, such action will promptly be followed by a reappraisal of the registration status of many products containing this pesticide chemical by the Pesticides Regulation Division. For example, when the tolerance of 0.1 parts per million for heptachlor was cancelled and the Food and Drug Administration announced that, henceforth, the tolerance would be zero, it became necessary for the U. S. Department of Agriculture to publish a notice in the Federal Register of the cancellation of the registration of many products containing heptachlor and to notify all registrants.

Prior to publishing this notice the Pesticides Regulation Division requested the Data Processing Division to furnish us with a listing of heptachlor registrants so that we could inform them of the action taken by the Food and Drug Administration and notify them of the information needed by them to bring their products into full compliance with the Act.

The Division has accumulated a very large volume of residue, efficacy, and toxicity information on residue method which is filed under names of the pesticide chemicals. However, we are not yet at the point where automatic data processing procedures are required in the case of these data, but nevertheless, there may be a need to consider this at some future date.