

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

There has been a lot of activity on the school meal plan issue. Last week saw a front page article in the *Wall Street Journal*, a hearing in the House Education and Work Force Committee and an interview of NPC's John Keeling on Fox News Family and Friends Show. Not only are potato interests involved, but so are other interested parties. The efforts to get comments to USDA have resulted in over 100,000 comments being made. The NPC is busy analyzing those comments now and we'll share them with you as they become available.

Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

What is the EPA PPDC and FIFRA?

The Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) was established in 1995 to provide a forum for a diverse group of stakeholders to provide feedback to the pesticide program on various pesticide regulatory, policy and program implementation issues. Through the NPC, Doug Hanks is a member of the committee and represents the potato industry. Past topics of discussion have included: inerts disclosure, registration review, spray drift, non-animal testing, antimicrobial pesticides, endangered species, reduced risk pesticides, labeling, minor uses, ecological standards, fees for service, experimental use permits, environmental marketing claims, outreach to the public, and several implementation issues emanating from the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. The most recent committee meeting was held in April, and here are some of the topics of discussion as reported by Doug:

1. IPM (Integrated Pest Management) The potato industry is best served by fully supporting IPM practices as defined by FIFRA (defined below). NPC supports the definition of IPM as codified in law as: "a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks." EPA would like to start a working group concentrating on just classroom IPM training, but Doug encouraged them to continue to let Ag IPM be included.
2. A spray drift update was given: In December 2010, it was thought that we would see new spray drift label language by June 2011. However, for the time being, spray drift is covered under FIFRA and so until there is a definition of "adverse effects and harm" in the statutes or regulation, spray drift will remain on hold. During that time, EPA will attempt to develop drift reduction technology.
3. Inerts Disclosure: Registrants are completely opposed to this because they believe it reveals proprietary information about formulations and since the ingredients are inert and generally regarded as safe there is no benefit to the public in disclosing this information.
4. Water Quality: The Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP - defined below) is working with the Office of Water to develop a harmonized guidance for aquatic benchmark criteria. A white paper is being prepared by the Science Advisory Panel (SAP - defined below) and should be complete by December. The paper will need to be monitored because of its impact on differing states monitoring practices and comparisons.
5. Pollinator Protection: Currently, colony collapse disorder is a very hot topic. A new working group has been formed; they are very organized and adamant about pesticides causing colony collapse disorder. In a discussion with John Keeling, we agreed that pesticides are only a minor cause to this very complex issue.

6. Children/Worker Risk Policy: Again, this is currently regulated under FIFRA. EPA needs to focus their efforts on enforcing the existing agricultural workplace labor laws (and strengthen them if necessary) rather than develop risk methods for pesticide exposure for very young children where risk is negligible, relative to the rates of physical injury for children under 12 in agricultural situations.

7. Endangered Species Act. (There is meeting in Denver on May 25 with all agencies to discuss this issue further. It will be interesting to get that report). In the last decade EPA has been sued by activists groups alleging that the Agency has failed to meet their obligation under the Endangered Species Act to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Services to determine possible impacts of individual pesticides on endangered species. In reality these lawsuits seek to force EPA to require interim measures to protect species while consultations are underway. The practical effect of the lawsuit could be to eliminate pesticide usage and obtain legal fees from the government. The latest lawsuit (CBD v. EPA) could seriously affect agriculture and pest control activities in 49 states if we are unable to resolve fundamental scientific issues at the heart of a consultation involving pesticides. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Secretaries of USDA, Department of Interior and Department of Commerce recently asked the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to provide guidance.

8. NPDES: The required date for implementation of a Clean Water Act general permit for pesticide applications in or near water has been stayed until October 31. EPA intends to release another version of the final permit which includes ESA provisions by the end of July. Hopefully Congress passes Senate Bill 718 to go along with the recently passed House Bill 872 exempting pesticide application from the Clean Water Act once and for all.

The next meeting EPA PPDC meeting is scheduled for October 12 and 13.

Useful definitions:

FIFRA: The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) provides for federal regulation of pesticide distribution, sale, and use. All pesticides distributed or sold in the United States must be registered (licensed) by EPA. Before EPA may register a pesticide under FIFRA, the applicant must show, among other things, that using the pesticide according to specifications "will not generally cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment."

FIFRA defines the term "unreasonable adverse effects on the environment" to mean: "(1) any unreasonable risk to man or the environment, taking into account the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of the use of any pesticide, or (2) a human dietary risk from residues that result from a use of a pesticide in or on any food inconsistent with the standard under section 408 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act."

OPP: Office of Pesticide Programs: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/contacts/office/location.htm>

SAP: Science Advisory Panel (SAP) - The FIFRA SAP, authorized under FIFRA, is an independent review panel. Its charge is to comment on actions under section 6 and 25(a), and to comment on and make recommendations on scientific analyses done by the Agency.

Calendar

May

18 USPB Webinar: Eliminating Barriers to Fresh Potato Sales, Noon-1:30 p.m. CST
25 IGSA Webinar: Customer and Credit, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

June

7 United of Idaho Board Meeting
7 IEOPC Meeting, Twin Falls, ID
8 IGSA Board Meeting, Twin Falls, ID
8 IEOPC Annual Golf outing, Twin Falls, ID (fees paid individually, contact Bob Hansen)
10 NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to June 1.
13-17 IPC Foodservice Whistlestop Tour
14-15 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
22-24 NPC Summer Meeting, Grand Forks ND. Click here for Registration information: <http://bit.ly/eCRR9>

27-1 IPC Retail Whistlestop Tour

July

5 Potato Night at the Ball Field, Melaleuca Field, Idaho Falls, Contact Todd Cornelison for tickets.

11-14 USBP Summer Meeting, Columbus, OH

26-27 IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID

27-1 IPC Retail Whistlestop Tour, Eastern Idaho

29-31 PMA Foodservice Convention, Monterey, CA