

# PESTICIDE REGULATION IN CANADA

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## Summary

Pesticides, including wood preservatives, are regulated by the newly created Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), part of Health Canada. In April 1995, the PMRA was created consolidating into one organization pesticide regulatory experts from Agriculture and Agrifood Canada, Environment Canada and Health Canada. The new PMRA has been created to address several key issues including timely access to cost - effective pest control products, concerns about the time and cost of the registration process and reduced use of chemical pesticides to mention a few. As a result, federal pesticide regulators within the PMRA will be creating and implementing improvements in the regulation of pesticides in Canada that are of interest to both users and manufacturers of wood preservatives.

## 1. Introduction

In April 1995, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) was formed within Health Canada to administer the pest management regulatory system. The PMRA was created as a measure to address several key issues emerging from a comprehensive review ( 1990 Pesticide Registration Review, PRR) of federal pesticide regulation. Concerns ranged from timely access to cost-effective pesticides, particularly for minor uses and alternatives, to the time and cost of the registration process and also included concerns about the safety of products and reduced use of chemical pesticides.

The business of the Agency is reflected in the following mandate: " Recognizing the principles of environmental sustainability,... to protect human health, safety and the environment by minimizing the risks associated with pesticides, while enabling access to pest management tools, namely, pest control products and pest management strategies."<sup>1</sup> Presently and in the months ahead, officials within the PMRA will be adopting changes to current practices and policies thereby creating an improved and more cost effective organization. These improvements are also aimed at providing better service to clients and Canadians.

## 2. Discussion

### Major PMRA Objectives

In order to proceed with changes that will effect positive change congruent with the new mandate, the PMRA have identified the following major objectives, namely to:

- protect health, safety and environment;
- support the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry, other resource sectors and manufacturing;
- regulate cost-effectively in an open and transparent manner; and

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<sup>1</sup> Government Proposal for the Pest Management Regulatory System, October, 1994, page 3.

- support the integration of pest management with the broader goals of environmental sustainability.

### PMRA Priorities

During the initial months, Agency officials have identified the following priorities:

1. Improve the efficiency of the registration review and decision making process Efficiencies have been already been identified that will lead to streamlining of operations related to the review of pesticides applications. As well there will be greater attention paid to monitoring performance on the part of both applicants and agency officials. For example, agency officials will be monitoring submission completeness and quality more closely. As well, agency officials are working toward timely and consolidated responses to applicants regarding their requests for registration.
2. Examine and revise organization and procedures to contribute to optimum efficiency  
As is common with other program changes currently underway within the federal government, the PMRA is examining the current organizational structure. The integration of pesticide specialists has presented an opportunity to consider a structure that will optimize Agency efficiency. There will also be changes in procedures and practices ( eg. the numbers of copies of data required) emerging that will contribute to overall efficiency.
3. Explore and participate in international harmonization activities and where possible, joint reviews with other regulatory agencies. The PMRA has several initiatives underway developing working relationships with other pesticide regulatory agencies. Harmonization activities, work sharing (with EA for example) are viewed as an opportunity for gaining ground both on work yet to be completed and yet to be received. Both PMRA recognize the potential resources savings and the potential to shorten the time required to complete reviews.
4. Develop a Cost Recovery strategy. The report " Proposal for the Pest Management Regulatory System", indicates that the Agency will require an annual revenue of \$20 million in order to implement all of the PRR recommendations and operate effectively. This would enable the Agency to deliver the expected 18 month timeline for registration decisions as well as conducting consultations regarding these decisions.  
Internationally, several pesticide regulatory have already adopted a cost recovery approach to doing business. Canada, does not have a fee schedule in line with other agencies nor is the current scheme in line with the cost to government to review applications to register products. Consequently, the PMRA is reviewing a range of options and will be consulting with stakeholders in 1996 regarding these options.  
The Agency fully recognizes that to regulate in a cost effective manner that it is also necessary to find opportunities to drive down costs. Opportunities such as harmonized data; the development or refinement of performance standards for agency operations and industry clients and finally the pursuit of joint review and use of international summaries.

5. Create new legislation to replace the current Pest Control Products Act. The drafting of new legislation has been a major project, to date. In the interim the current legislation provides for continued operation of the basic activities of the Agency ie. assessments of safety, merit and value and the resulting regulatory decisions. The project to develop a new Act will advance in the months ahead while improving efficiency and implementing cost recovery. There are several key aspects that will require careful consideration before the new Act is completed - data ownership and use to name but one. Once prepared, the legislation will be released for discussion and consultation, as would any new legislation.

#### Pesticide Regulatory Activities of Interest to the CWPA

As previously mentioned, the PMRA is pursuing harmonization activities with other pesticide regulatory agencies with the interest of exploring possible efficiency measures. One such initiative affects and involves the wood preservation sector. Specifically, a close relationship has been developed between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and PMRA in which work sharing between agencies is being piloted in the reevaluation/reregistration of creosote. Two of the principle objectives of the project are to exchange information regarding the safety assessment process and where common data have been requested - share the reviews conducted by evaluators in each agency. This initiative is viewed to hold prospects for reducing the time and resources required to complete safety reviews for products by profiting from each others accomplishments in this area. Both Agencies agree that possible resource savings resulting from this approach would be welcomed by both government and industry.

The creosote manufacturers have expressed support for the project, acknowledging at least two potential benefits: 1. potential harmonization of data and 2. advancing the regulatory decision making process. Early in 1996, regulatory officials from both agencies will be sharing observations regarding scientific and efficiency aspects of the pilot project. As well, discussions are underway regarding the possible expansion of the pilot project to include other active ingredients characterized as heavy duty wood preservatives.

In the months ahead, the PMRA will be looking for other opportunities in the interest of rendering scientific assessments and the resulting decision in a more timely and cost effective manner .

### **3. Conclusion**

The PMRA looks forward to working with CWPA members and other stakeholders in present and future harmonization projects as well as other activities destined to improve pesticide regulation in Canada.