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SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

EPA Announces Tolerance Requests for Several New Pesticides

- The EPA recently announced that it has received requests for maximum residue limits (MRLs) for 15 new pesticides, including several MRLs covering pome fruit, including pears.
- The requests include new tolerances for indaziflam on all pome fruit, including pears, at 0.01 parts per million (ppm). Also requested was an MRL for fluopyram on pome fruit at 1.0 ppm.
- Comments are due by February 5, 2010. For complete details, please see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/E9-31192.pdf>.

UK Reports on November Monitoring Results for Pesticides on Fresh Pears

- The United Kingdom's (UK) Pesticide Residues Committee (PRC) recently published the November results of its monthly monitoring of pesticide residues on fresh pears.
- The survey examined 6 product samples from 4 different countries, excluding the U.S. One sample of Turkish pears contained excessive amitraz residues of 0.2 ppm. The European MRL for amitraz on pears is 0.05 ppm.
- The PRC issued a notice regarding MRL violation through the European Union's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). However, an independent scientific risk assessment showed that the amount of amitraz residues on the product is not likely to cause adverse health effects.
- The PRC will discuss these results at their January 2010 meeting. Results from fourth quarter of 2009 (October- December) is scheduled for discussion at the PRC's May 2010 meeting. For more information, please see: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2828>.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

EPA to Revise Crop Grouping Regulations

- The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced several proposed revisions to its pesticide tolerance crop grouping regulations, which permit the establishment of maximum residue limits (MRLs) for various related crops. As the second in a series of planned crop grouping revisions, the EPA aims to encourage the use of crop groupings in the MRL establishment process and increase the availability of lower-risk pesticides on minor crops both domestically and from countries which export to the U.S.
- The proposed revisions will increase Crop Group 11-09 covering pome fruit from the current 5 commodities to 10 commodities. The new commodities include Asian pears (*Pyrus pyrifolia*), which were not previously included in EPA's list of commodities.
- Comments are due by March 8, 2010. To view the proposed revisions in full or submit a comment, please see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/E10-31397.pdf>.

EPA Registration of Spirotetramat Invalidated Due to Procedural Oversight

- On December 23, a U.S. district court judge issued a court order for EPA to rescind approval of spirotetramat, an insecticide manufactured by Bayer CropScience and commonly sold under the product names Movento and Ultor. Per the ruling, spirotetramat will be prohibited for sale in the U.S. effective January 15.
- The judge cited the EPA's failure to issue registration review notices and establish a public comment period, actions which are required by federal law in the approvals process of a new pesticide ingredient.
- Spirotetramat, which was approved for conditional use by the EPA in June 2008, protects fruits, vegetables, and nuts (including pears) from pests such as aphids, cicadas, grape lice, mealy bugs, whiteflies, and cottony cushion scales.
- Scientific studies have linked pesticide use to increased bee mortality, specifically to the young honeybee (larvae) populations. The EPA addressed the potential danger the chemical posed to honeybees by mandating that all end-use products containing spirotetramat carry a label stating, "This product is potentially toxic to honey bee larvae through residues in pollen and nectar, but not to adult honey bees. Exposure of adult bees to direct treatment or residues on blooming crops can lead to effects on honey bee larvae."
- The judge solely cited the EPA's procedural omissions as the basis for the decision to invalidate the pesticide's registration.
- As the defendants in the case, the EPA and Bayer CropScience will have 60 days to appeal the ruling.

Bolivia Seeks Re-Inclusion in Trade Preference Program

- According to recent media reports, U.S. and Bolivian officials plan to meet soon to discuss bilateral ties, including Bolivia's possible re-involvement in the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) program.
- Bolivia was excluded from receiving preferential market access under the program due to its refusal to comply with certain drug eradication requirements of ATPDEA, among other disputes. Other ATPDEA countries recently received a one-year extension of the program until December 31, 2010.

India Seeks Comments on New Food Safety Regulations

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recently published a proposed overhaul of food safety regulations for public comments. The Food Safety and Standards Rules and Regulations 2009 will replace the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1995, which includes MRLs, packaging and labeling requirements, food additive and contaminant restrictions, and many other food standards.
- Due to the scope of the proposed regulations, a full analysis of the potential changes is not yet available. A cursory review of the MRL section suggests the MRLs are proposed for a similar number of pesticides as are already established.
- India has recently extended the comment deadline until January 31, 2010. To review the proposed documents, please see:
<http://www.fssai.gov.in/ViewContentDetails.aspx?data=aQVuCsWQNww6gRIZbLiCs4DCydmXAna1t6yRLyr77TtJLzt2xJuASZTNSWGklm6wglf50Us%2fnNg9rP%2b%2fA4JRXEiuLhd6nACLdTXAyJIDMQ%3d>

2010 Marks Start of Several Free Trade Agreements

- On January 1, 2010, the free trade agreement (FTA) between China and member states of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) went into effect. The agreement will eliminate tariffs on 90 percent of Chinese goods in 2010 for most ASEAN countries, and by 2015 for Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar. However, some experts indicate that the agreement does little to resolve non-tariff barriers to trade. Additionally, Indonesia may seek to delay implementation of the agreement due to fears of an influx of Chinese goods. China and ASEAN implemented a more limited FTA in 2005.
- An FTA between China and Peru is scheduled to enter into force on January 15.
- The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA) also entered force on January 1. Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand have not yet implemented the agreement. The FTA is expected to benefit Australian and New Zealand agricultural producers and will eliminate tariffs on 96 percent of Australian exports to ASEAN.
- A trade agreement between South Korea and India also came into effect at the start of the year. In related news, South Korea has indicated its intention of completing FTAs with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain) and Peru in 2010.