



December 28, 2006

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US Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Pesticide Programs
Special Review and Reregistration Division (7508P)
Ariel Rios Building
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Washington, DC 20460

Subject: Comments to Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2004-0348 on the Malathion RED

Since the summer of 2004 the Western IPM Center's Pacific Northwest (PNW) Workgroup has submitted five responses (attached) to a variety of malathion information requests from USDA. These requests were generated through USDA's involvement in the malathion reregistration process. While most of the issues raised in previous submittals have been satisfactorily addressed by EPA, the malathion Reregistration Eligibility Decision (RED) document contains several provisions, discussed below, that are problematic to PNW growers.

BLUEBERRY

As we have previously indicated, blueberry growers in our region require a 2# ai/A use rate for the application of EC and WP malathion formulations to blueberries. The lower rate (1.25# ai/A) being proposed by EPA is acceptable in cases where malathion is being tank mixed with other insecticides; however, when malathion is used alone for aphid control the 1.25# ai/A rate is not effective. Aphids transmit disease in blueberries thus adequate control is an important issue to growers. Malathion is an important chemical to PNW blueberry growers because of the short PHI, the low cost, and its relatively low toxicity. Originally we had asked EPA to allow 3 applications of malathion per year to blueberries; however, if the choice is between three applications per year at 1.25# ai/A and two applications per year at 2# ai/A, growers would prefer that EPA allow two applications at 2# ai/A and decrease the allowable applications from 3 to 2. We are asking that EPA reconsider the mitigation measures proposed in the malathion RED and increase the use rate for non-ULV malathion formulations to 2# ai/A for blueberries.

CHERRY

As stated in the attached letters, in both Oregon and Utah, cherry growers rely on malathion for cherry fruit fly (CFF) control. Because CFF is a quarantine pest, control is of utmost importance to growers. While Utah tart cherry growers are happy with the number of malathion applications EPA is proposing to allow on cherries, Oregon sweet cherry growers are not. Over the years

there has been much interest in extending the sweet cherry season and more orchard acreage has been planted with new later-ripening varieties. Currently it is estimated that 70% of Oregon's 14,000 acres of sweet cherries are planted with early- to mid-ripening varieties such as Bing, Royal Anne, Corum, Bada, Chelan, Sandra Rose, Sonata, Tieton, Benton, and Van. (Bing, Sandra Rose, Solata, Benton, and Van are all mid-ripening varieties while the others are early.) The remaining 30% of Oregon's sweet cherry acreage is planted with late-ripening varieties such as Black Republican, Lambert, Lapins, Ranier, Attika, Regina, Selah, Skeena, Sweetheart, Staccato, and Sunset Bing. While six applications of malathion will provide adequate CFF control for the early- and mid-ripening varieties, the late-ripening sweet cherries require more than 6 malathion applications for adequate control. Late-ripening cherries pit harden and begin to soften, becoming susceptible to CFF, at the same time as earlier-ripening varieties. Because cherries require weekly malathion applications for CFF control from the time the fruit softens until harvest, and because these varieties ripen so much later than the earlier varieties, more malathion applications are required for adequate CFF control for the later-ripening varieties. For example Sweetheart cherries ripen 21 days after Bings and Staccato ripen 7 to 10 days after Sweethearts. If Bings require 6 applications for adequate CFF control then Sweetheart cherries require 9 applications and Staccato can require up to 11 malathion applications. Thus, we are asking that EPA allow 11 applications of malathion per year to late-ripening cherries for CFF control.

Washington's sweet cherry growers have shifted to relying on spinosad (GF-120 Naturalyte Fruit Fly Bait) for CFF control. Oregon growers, however, do not yet view this use of spinosad as a proven technology. While there is some use of spinosad in Oregon buffer zones, growers are reluctant to switch to using spinosad until more testing has been conducted. Oregon cherry growers now rely on an area-wide control program for CFF control that is based on the aerial application of malathion. This program has proven successful and, because CFF control is such an important issue, growers are reluctant to switch to alternate control methodologies. Until additional testing has been conducted showing that spinosad provides reliable, cost-effective CFF control in Oregon's sweet cherry growing areas, Oregon growers will continue to rely on weekly aerial applications of malathion. We are asking that EPA allow up to 11 aerial applications of malathion per season to the 30% of Oregon's sweet cherry acreage comprised of late-ripening varieties.

TREES GROWN FOR PULP

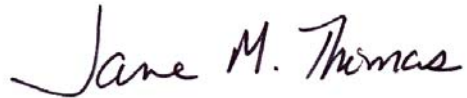
In our area cottonwood and poplar trees are grown in tree plantations for pulp and wood production. Both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Washington State Department of Agriculture have issued SLNs (OR-000016 and WA-960004) that provide for the use of malathion in cottonwood/poplar plantations for grasshopper control. This use was not addressed in the malathion RED.

PASTURE/RANGELAND

We previously raised the issue of whether or not the 1-day PHI being proposed for malathion use on pastures and rangeland equated to a 1-day grazing restriction. If so this will be problematic for malathion use for grasshopper control on rangeland as it is impractical to remove cattle from rangeland when treating for insects.

As additional background information, please find attached to this letter the malathion comment letters that the PNW Workgroup has previously submitted to USDA. Please contact me if you have further questions or require additional information about malathion use in the PNW.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane M. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

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