

PESTICIDES – FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT OF 1996

by

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I. Pesticide - Food Quality Protection Act of 1996

- A. As a result of the Federal Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, EPA has been mandated to review various classes of pesticides under stringent new standards. The first classes of pesticides that EPA must review are organophosphates and carbamates, which make up a large percentage of chemicals that potato growers rely upon to protect their crops from pests and diseases.
- B. Because organophosphates and carbamates make up a large percentage of chemicals that potato growers rely upon to protect their crops from pests and diseases, the Washington State Potato Commission has been very active in working with EPA officials to communicate the importance of maintaining use of these chemicals.
- C. In addition, the Washington State Potato Commission has been active in looking for new chemicals to replace existing ones that may be in danger under the new law.
- D. The Washington State Potato Commission also needs your help in getting realistic data concerning chemical use to EPA. In order to comply with the stringent deadlines of the Act, EPA has been forced to make assumptions about chemical use and risk when reassessing various chemicals. In most cases, EPA overestimates or overstates chemical use patterns, when making assumptions. The Washington State Potato Commission has a chemical use survey at its booth, which we would like you to take a couple of minutes to fill out, to help us get realistic data for EPA, so they don't make assumptions on chemical use.

II. Fertilizer Safety

- A. When the fertilizer issue first came to light early last year, the Washington State Potato Commission was one of the first agricultural organizations to look into some of the claims coming out of Quincy. In April of 1997, the Washington State Department of Agriculture collected potato samples from around the state and submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Laboratory in Bothell, Washington for analysis of heavy metals. The results of the FDA analysis showed that levels of heavy metals found in the potatoes were infinitesimal or practically non-existent, and would be considered naturally occurring.
- B. Despite the fact there is no evidence of a problem of fertilizers compromising the safety of our food, the Washington State Potato Commission has been cooperating with the Governor's office, state agencies, and legislators to assure that public concerns and perceptions about fertilizer are addressed.

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The Washington State Potato Commission has been at the table during discussions concerning the Governor's proposed fertilizer safety legislation, and is supportive of the Governor's bill in principle, particularly components relating to grower's right to know, and a risk based registration process for fertilizer.

III. Research

- A. In 1997, the Washington State Potato Commission worked to protect existing Federal Funding for USDA potato research programs, in the face of proposed budget cuts by the Clinton Administration.
 - 1. One example of this included proposed cuts to the Prosser Research Station where a great deal of potato research is done. The Washington State Potato Commission actively opposed these cuts in 1997 and was successful in restoring funding to the Prosser Research Station. In 1998, the President's Executive Budget Request once again includes cutting the Prosser Research Station, and the Washington State Potato Commission will be working again to restore funding to Prosser.

IV. Establishment of a Mid-Columbia Basin Groundwater Management Area

- A. During 1997, The Washington State Potato Commission has been actively facilitating establishment of the Groundwater Management Area. The WSPC was involved in coordinating several meetings which brought various parties to the table, and ultimately resulted in the establishment of the GWMA, which will be signed by various agency officials later today at a ceremony at the new Grant County Air Terminal.
- B. Environmental Issues
 - 1. Salmon (and how it relates to the water availability)

V. Legislative / Regulatory Awareness

- A. Olympia Potato Day
- B. EPA Tour in Washington State