

**AZINPHOS-METHYL REVIEW
INFORMATION SHEET
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

What is azinphos-methyl?

Azinphos-methyl is a broad spectrum organophosphorus insecticide.

How does it work?

Azinphos-methyl works by poisoning the nervous system in the insects. Azinphos-methyl inhibits the enzyme acetylcholinesterase, interrupting the transmission of nerve impulses.

What is it used for?

Products containing azinphos-methyl are used on pome and stone fruit, citrus, macadamia nuts and grapes, with further minor uses in crops such as lychees, kiwifruit and blueberries. The main use is for the control of codling moth and light brown apple moth, predominately in pome and stone fruit orchards.

Why is azinphos-methyl being reviewed?

Azinphos-methyl products are being reviewed as part of the APVMA chemical review program, because of concerns about possible environmental, public health, food safety and trade risks.

How is the review being conducted?

In undertaking the review the APVMA received information from a number of sources including scientific data packages submitted by registrants, submissions received from the public, published literature and international reports.

In evaluating the information and preparing the recommendations of the review, the APVMA received advice from the Office of Chemical Safety within the Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of the Environment and Heritage. Advice was also received from state government agencies.

What did the APVMA find in its review?

On the basis of the assessment of the data available to it, the APVMA finds that:

- azinphos-methyl residues in apricots and kiwi fruit may pose a potential risk to consumers;
- the use of azinphos-methyl products in some situations may pose a potential risk the environment;
- the mixing and loading of some products may pose a potential risk to users of the products.

What are we proposing to do about it?

The residues assessment identified an unacceptable short term dietary risk from exposure to residues of azinphos-methyl on apricots and kiwi fruit. As a result of these concerns the APVMA proposes to cancel uses on these two fruits.

The environmental assessment identified an unacceptable risk to the environment from using azinphos-methyl products. As a result of these concerns the APVMA proposes to cancel the use of azinphos-methyl in citrus orchards and include new environmental protection statements on the labels.

It was found that mixing and loading of the chemical products may present an unacceptable risk to workers due to small opening in the containers, leading to sloshing and glugging when pouring. As a result of this concern, the APVMA proposes that all product containers should incorporate a wide neck opening.

Some product labels do not contain adequate first aid and safety directions to allow safe use; however the APVMA proposes that labels be updated so that they contain adequate safety information.

Why has the APVMA made these recommendations?

The APVMA has proposed these recommendations to ensure that the continuing use of products containing azinphos-methyl do not present an undue risk to the environment and public health and safety.

What this will mean for users of azinphos-methyl products?

The recommended findings of the review, if implemented, would have the following impacts:

The use of azinphos-methyl products in most situations will be retained. For some products there will be restrictions on the way the chemical can be used and supplied. Labels will also contain more detailed instructions relating to the use of the products and protection of the environment.

What is happening overseas?

The use of azinphos-methyl in the United States

The USEPA has reviewed azinphos-methyl as part of their review and re-registration process for all organophosphate insecticides. In their interim Re-registration Eligibility Decision, 35 uses of azinphos-methyl have been cancelled with a further 10 uses which currently in the process of being re-evaluated.

The use of azinphos-methyl in the Canada

The Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has completed the re-assessment of azinphos-methyl and determined that due to unacceptable worker exposure all uses of azinphos-methyl are to be phased out. The decision and timeframes to phase out uses in Canada are similar to the decisions reached for this chemical in the USA.

The use of azinphos-methyl in the United Kingdom

Azinphos-methyl is not registered in the United Kingdom.

The use of azinphos-methyl in the European Union

The European Union is currently reviewing azinphos-methyl as part of its re-evaluation program under Council Directive (91/414/EEC). Azinphos-methyl is at stage 1 of the process with assessments ongoing.

Why is Australia retaining the use of azinphos-methyl when North America is not?

The USA have forty-five registered uses for azinphos-methyl compared with fourteen in Australia. Australian use of azinphos-methyl is limited and only use on pome fruit, stone fruit and blueberries is common with the USA. The application rate of products in the USA was also up to three times that used in Australia. Therefore, the use of azinphos-methyl products in Australia was assessed as presenting a lower risk than the USA or Canada.

How can the public Comment?

Comments can be made on the Preliminary Review Findings report.

A copy of the Preliminary Review Findings report can be found on the APVMA web site (<http://www.apvma.gov.au>).

Comments need to be received by **15 December 2006** and can be made either by email chemrev@apvma.gov.au or by direct mail to the APVMA:

Evaluator, Azinphos-methyl Review
Chemical Review
Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority
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BACKGROUND

What is the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)?

The APVMA is the Australian Government statutory authority responsible for the regulation of pesticides and veterinary medicines up to the point of retail sale. All pesticides and veterinary medicines must be registered by the APVMA prior to being supplied, sold or used throughout Australia. Pesticides include products that are used around the home garden and those used for commercial or agricultural purposes.

What is product registration?

Registration means that the pesticide or veterinary medicine has been rigorously assessed to ensure that it works, is safe for people, animals and the environment, has been manufactured to appropriate standards and does not pose an unacceptable risk to Australia's trade with other countries.

All registered products have an approved label that includes instructions for correct use and relevant safety information. Registered products must have a distinguishing number on the label APVMA Approval no. xxxxx/ or NRA Approval No. xxxxx/. This number can be checked for authenticity on the APVMA's website (<http://www.apvma.gov.au/>) using the product search facility.

What is a chemical review?

The APVMA has a program for reconsidering (reviewing) the registration of older chemicals that are currently on the market. Reviews are undertaken when there is new information that raises potential concerns about a chemical's ongoing use, suggesting that its registration should be reassessed. This is the process undertaken for products containing azinphos-methyl.

Reviews can be triggered by new research or other evidence that has raised concerns about one or more of the following:

- the safety of people using the chemical or the product;
- an effect that is harmful to public health;
- an unintended effect that is harmful to animals, plants or to the environment;
- a prejudice to trade or commerce between Australia and places outside Australia;
- whether the product is effective when used as instructed by the label; and
- adequacy of label instructions for the safe and effective use of the product.

When the APVMA decides to reconsider the registration of a chemical it will call for any relevant new information from registrants and the public, it may also require registrants to conduct new studies. The APVMA then assesses all of the available information and publishes a review report that details its findings. The assessment also forms the basis for decisions about the future availability of the chemical or how it is used.

There are three possible outcomes from a review:

- The APVMA is satisfied that products are safe and effective and the chemical use can continue based on existing instructions;
- The APVMA has identified that some aspects of the chemical or its use may not be safe and therefore makes changes to the conditions of registration and/or the label instructions; or
- The APVMA is not satisfied that continued use of the chemicals will be safe and effective and suspends or cancels the chemical.