



INFORMATION SHEET

Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority

About the APVMA

Overview of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Use

Agricultural and veterinary chemicals are vital to quality food and fibre production. Australia's primary production is worth an estimated \$30 billion a year with an export value of over \$25 billion.

Agricultural and veterinary chemical products help ensure this level of production can be maintained. The majority of primary producers rely on agricultural and veterinary chemicals to protect their crops and animals from disease and pests.

There are over 6500 different agricultural and veterinary chemical products in the Australian marketplace. With such a wide choice of chemical products available, farmers need to know that the products they use will not only work, but won't harm themselves, their family or the environment.

That is why Australia has a national registration system, requiring these products to be tested and assessed before they can be legally supplied, sold or used. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the agency responsible for managing this system.

The APVMA is a Commonwealth Statutory Authority established in 1993 to centralise the regulation of all agricultural and veterinary chemical products into the Australian marketplace. Previously each State and Territory government had its own system of regulation.

So What does this Registration System Involve?

The APVMA assesses applications from chemical companies and individuals seeking registration so

they can supply their product to the marketplace. Applications undergo rigorous assessment using the expertise of the APVMA's scientific staff and drawing on the technical knowledge of other relevant scientific organisations and State agriculture departments. If the product works as intended and the scientific data confirms that when used as directed on the product label it will have no negative effects on people, animals, the environment or international trade, then the product will be registered.

The time taken to register a product varies. A new product with a similar composition to an existing registered product takes as little as 3 months before it is approved and ready for the shelves of rural suppliers. More complex applications, such as the development of a new active constituent, may take up to 15 months to complete the detailed assessment.

The APVMA's role is that of an industry regulator. It is not involved in identifying opportunities in the marketplace and promoting registration of a product to meet this purpose. It is up to chemical companies and individuals to identify a need and develop a suitable product. Alternatively, farmer associations may identify a market for a new product and convince chemical companies to develop and register a product that meets this identified need.

Do All Products Used for Agricultural or Veterinary Purposes Require Registration?

Biological or natural products are sometimes used for the treatment or protection from pests and diseases.

APVMA Publications can be accessed via the world wide web.

www.apvma.gov.au

About the APVMA continued...

In cases where a product lays claim to controlling a particular condition or has beneficial effects, then registration may be required. To find out if a biological or natural product does require registration contact the Registration Client Services of the APVMA.

How do I Know if a Product is Registered?

Purchasing chemicals from a reputable supplier is a good start. The product label is also a handy source of information. Most registered products carry an approval number, usually at the bottom of the label. Older product labels may not carry this approval number, so if you are unsure, ask for confirmation from your supplier or contact the APVMA.

Does the APVMA do Anything More than Register Products?

As well as registering new agricultural and veterinary products, the APVMA reviews older chemical products that have been on the market for a substantial period of time to ensure they still do the job users expect and are safe to use. The APVMA also reviews registered chemicals when particular concerns are raised about their safety and effectiveness. The review of a chemical may result in confirmation of its registration or it may see registration continue with some changes to the way the chemical can be used. In a small number of cases the review may result in the registration of a chemical being cancelled and products taken off the market. Chemical products can also become unavailable because the chemical company has taken them off the market for commercial reasons.

The APVMA also works in conjunction with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) to avoid the potentially harmful consequences resulting from the importation of

unregistered agricultural and veterinary chemical products. Imported products may place the user at unnecessary risk. The products have not been assessed for use under Australian conditions and could cause damage or even kill valuable crops and livestock.

Why Should I Use Registered Products?

By purchasing registered chemical products, you know:

- They have been assessed as suitable for use under Australian conditions;
- When used according to the label, they will not have any negative effects on you, your family, your crops and animals or the environment;
- You are complying with the law; and
- When used according to the label you will minimise waste and cost.

Contacting the APVMA

Want more information?

If you would like to know more about the APVMA or any of its services please contact us.

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