

Follow up to Registrant Satisfaction Surveys

During 2005-2006, the APVMA conducted four surveys to measure registrant satisfaction, using our list of product registrants and company contact personnel.

In the survey we sought registrant responses to a range of questions related to general service levels, answering of questions and enquiries, clarity of written letters, management of complaints and customer service. There were also questions relating to the APVMA website.

The survey invited comments and suggestions for improvements to service delivery. These have been summarised below, with comments on what the APVMA has done or will do to address them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICE DELIVERY

The most common themes for suggestions were (in order of frequency):

1. Improved timeliness of screening and evaluations

The APVMA has statutory timeframes that we strive to achieve. Since July 2005 timeframe performance has improved dramatically.

The introduction of data protection legislation in 2005 has increased the complexity of screening and the processing of applications. Registrants do need to provide accurate data lists to reduce the number of times the APVMA has to correspond with the registrant.

What have we done?

- We have continued reform of internal processes (known as the timeframes project) designed to simplify application processes and reduce the time taken to finalise applications;
- We have introduced submission of e-copies of labels;
- We have introduced the ability for applicants to submit applications and data on compact disc;
- We have revised application forms so that applicants can agree to receive advice on an application by email rather than regular post.

What will we do?

- We are introducing a process that will allow you to change certain pack sizes without approval. This will mean that registrants will not need to apply for such changes;
- We expect to introduce beta testing of an on-line application system in October. This will mean less paper handling for both applicants and APVMA staff;
- We will provide more guidance on why applications may be rejected at screening. This will mean that applicants will be more aware of our requirements and should be less likely to submit deficient applications.

2. Improved timeliness for responses to phone calls and emails

APVMA evaluators are focussed on completing science-based assessments on applications within statutory timeframes. We are pleased to provide advice to applicants on categories of applications and data requirements, however we do have to be careful not to become, in effect, registration consultants for individual companies.

What have we done?

- We are continuing to develop our Manual of Requirements and Guidelines (MORAG) as a tool to provide clear and comprehensive information on registration requirements, reducing the need for applicants to contact evaluators directly
- We have provided a self-service centre on the APVMA website for frequently asked questions

What will we do?

- By end 2006, we expect to launch a new facility to lodge on-line applications. After this we will develop electronic access by applicants to our application tracking system, so that applicants can track applications in real-time.

3. Better consistency of information and advice

We strive to provide consistent information and advice, largely based on MORAG, our reference manual. Whilst the legislation offers a number of 'standard' categories for applications, there is some flexibility that the APVMA can use with certain types of applications. Applicants often ask for a flexible approach to be applied to their application and each application is considered on a case-by-case basis.

What have we done?

- Administrative staff in the AME team are frequently briefed on critical issues so that they can better understand enquiries and provide the best answers
- We have published MORAG that is updated twice yearly, to provide clear, consistent information to both applicants and APVMA evaluators on requirements for data, evaluation and labelling
- We have made MORAG available on our website, on CD and binders for printed versions are available at no cost from the APVMA

What will we do?

- We are developing a more structured training program for new evaluators
- We plan to place flow diagrams of our registration processes on the APVMA website so that applicants can clearly see the processes we follow
- All 'standard' application-type letters are being re-drafted to ensure greater consistency across correspondence

4. Better understanding of commercial realities

The APVMA assesses applications covering a very wide number of product groups. We strive to have broad expertise across all product groups and industries.

What have we done?

- The APVMA has a program of study visits to industry to improve evaluator understanding of industry
- Knowledge of the agvet chemicals industry is a criterion for selection of relevant staff for employment in the APVMA
- We have worked to increase exposure of staff through user industry seminars and workshops

We expect through these initiatives that we will improve our ability to address concerns raised by product registrants and company personnel, as much as possible.