Dinsob Press Release

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EPA WARNS OF RISKS TO PREGNANT WOMEN FROM APPLICATION OF DINOSEB PESTICIDE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today warned that exposure of pregnant women to the pesticide dinoseb during its application in the field may pose a risk of birth defects to their unborn children. Women of child-bearing age are cautioned to avoid exposure to dinoseb during application. The agency believes that dietary exposure to dinoseb is not of concern.

"Today's announcement is primarily aimed at making sure that the agricultural community in particular understands the health risks associated with the exposure of women to dinoseb. EPA will be taking appropriate regulatory action very soon," said A. James Barnes, EPA Deputy Administrator.

Exposure to dinoseb during its application and working in fields shortly after the application of this product are the particular agency concerns. Care should also be taken in handling or laundering contaminated clothing.

Today's action is based upon studies which EPA recently received indicating that dinoseb caused birth defects in laboratory animals. The effects were associated with exposure during pregnancy. Defects include irreversible neurological and skeletal malformations in the offspring of animals exposed to the chemical.

"The available evidence shows that eating foods from dinoseb-treated fields does not pose a concern," Barnes added. "The dangerous routes of exposure are inhalation and skin absorbtion by people applying the pesticide in the field."

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The agency also is in receipt of other studies showing that dinoseb causes fertility effects in male rats and mice. While EPA's primary concern is for women, because of the sterility studies the agency is recommending that all persons working with dinoseb take precautions from direct exposure associated with the application of the pesticide.

Dr. Jack Moore, EPA Assistant Administrator for Pesticide and Toxic Substances, said, "The residue levels of dinoseb in crops are extremely low compared to the levels which cause birth defects in test animals. Hence, we do not believe that eating products from dinoseb-treated fields presents a concern. However, direct exposure to workers in the field as a result of application should be avoided."

The Food and Drug Administration tested for residues of dinoseb in 70 products in 1985 and 1986. These included peanuts; sweet, red and white potatoes from three areas of the country; and other crops. No dinoseb levels were detected except in cotton seed meal. The cotton seed meal levels were 0.02 parts per million — a fifth of the allowable residue level.

Dinoseb is highly toxic to humans by exposure through the skin as well as inhalation and label directions require protective clothing for applicators. It is applied by either ground equipment, airplanes or hand held spray guns.

Dinoseb is primarily a contact herbicide used to control broadleaf weeds. There are approximately 180 registered products containing dinoseb (or its four salts) as an active ingredient. Between 7 and 11 million pounds of dinoseb active ingredient are annually sprayed as a liquid from airplanes, tractor-drawn equipment and hand-held equipment. As much as 25 percent of this pesticide can be used in fall and winter. Dinoseb is also used as a desiccant (to dry growing vegetation before harvest), as a fungicide and as an insecticide.

Dinoseb is not registered for homeowner uses.

The major use sites by volume include soybeans (40.0 percent), cotton (15 percent), potatoes (16 percent), peanuts (9 percent), alfalfa (4 percent), snap beans (2 percent), peas (2 percent), grapes (2 percent), and almonds (1 percent).

Other use sites include clovers, flax, barley, oats, rye, wheat, apples, appricots, cherries, citrus, dates, figs, nectarines, olives, peaches, plums, filberts, pecans, walnuts, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, gooseberries, loganberries, raspberries, strawberries, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, currants, lima and kidney beans, onions, garlic, hops, ornamentals, cone bearing trees, right-of-ways, and aquatic drainage ditches.

The common trade names of dinoseb are: DNBP, DNOSBP, "dinitro", dinoseb (F-ISO), Caldon, Sinox, Vertac General and Selective Weed Killer, Basanite, Chemox General & PE, Chemsect, Dinitrex, Dinitro-3, Dinitro General, Drexel Dynamite 3, Dynamite, Elgetol 318, Gebutox, Hel-Fire, Kiloseb, Nitropone C, Subitex, Unicrop DNBP, Vertac Dinitro Weed Killer 5, Dynanap, Premerge Plus with Dinitro, and Klean Krop.

There are a total of 80 registrants, both U.S. and foreign, including: Baird and McGuire, Uniroyal Chemical Company, Vertac Chemical Corp., Hoechst AG, S.H. Marks Co. Ltd., Universal Crop Protection Ltd., S.N.P.E., and Combinatal Chimic Fararar.

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