

Notes From PMAC

Editor's note: the Canadian Pest Management Association is represented on the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency's Pest Management Advisory Council. Richard Murphy of Aetna Pest Control, Ltd. represented CPMA at the January 16th and 17th meeting in Ottawa. His report follows:

The meeting was well chaired and well organized. The agenda was highly informative with excellent and many relevant presentations given. Of course some items on the agenda were more relevant to the interests of the CPMA than others.

The first item discussed was the impending fiscal belt tightening at the federal level. It should come as no surprise that the Harper government intends to drastically reduce the federal deficit. When the Prime Minister talks about increasing the retirement age from 65 to 67, phased in over 10 years, we know sweeping changes are coming in the 2012 budget. What we don't want is the PMRA budget slashed. One example of CPMA and PMRA cooperation are the bed bug and termite steering committees that are working towards new active ingredients being registered in Canada. While progress is painfully slow, the PMRA has put time and energy into these committees. If there is a nasty negative fiscal retrenchment, the committees may be amongst the first things to go.

With respect to regulatory cooperation, very positive moves are being made. Canada and the US have set up a joint action plan which specifically sets out 29 initiatives seeking greater alignment in their regulatory approaches within two years' time. Of most interest, they are going to encourage joint submissions and address obstacles to joint registrations. Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) the PMRA and EPA have recently granted a registration simultaneously for a herbicide. The PMRA and EPA are making significant progress in their efforts to harmonize their regulatory systems.

On January 17th at 7:00 am Dr. Leonard Ritter, of the University of Guelph, released "Integrating Emerging Technologies into Chemical Safety Assessment". The full report can be found online at www.scienceadvice.ca. At 9:00 am Dr. Ritter gave a talk to PMAC. Essentially what Dr. Ritter and his panel are doing is getting away from animal testing. They will be testing the full pesticide compound and not just the active ingredient. I've often wondered if solvents and emulsifiers in a pesticide weren't as toxic as the active ingredient, the panel obviously wondered the same thing. They came up with a total game changer in the world of chemical testing. To quote Dr. Ritter "By drawing upon knowledge from fields such as information science, biology, and computational toxicology, testing will become more predictive, specific, reliable, faster, less expensive, and better inform human health risk assessment".

On the topic of compliance and enforcement, the PMRA is actively working with the International community and recently (September 2011) hosted a conference for heads of pesticide regulatory authorities. They are looking to develop and implement an international compliance and enforcement structure to facilitate more global cooperation in pesticide compliance and enforcement issues. On a more national level, they will be working closely with the Canadian Border Services Agency to reduce risks posed by imported non-registered pest control products. I informed the council that the internet is truly the "wild west". Many otherwise law abiding citizens in total frustration have illegally imported products to deal with their pest control problems. The compliance arm of the PMRA is actively investigating this matter and has requested our help in reducing these activities. As stakeholders at PMAC, the CPMA may make suggestions for future agenda items. These are normally put forward for discussion six months prior to the future meeting. I strongly suggest we talk about our needs and wants and put forward our agenda items to be incorporated in the next council.