

International Effort Results in Canada Registering a Major New Herbicide

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has recently accepted for registration Sundance (sulfosulfuron) herbicide, a Monsanto product for the control of wild oats and certain broadleaf weeds in wheat.

This registration is especially significant as it marks the first time that a chemical has been reviewed through a cooperative international effort that extends beyond the joint-review work of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Technical Working Group (TWG) on Pesticides. For the sulfosulfuron review, Canada, the United States, Australia, and the European Union (EU), with Ireland as the lead EU country, participated in a pilot project that focussed on exchange and utilization of each others' reviews.

The pilot confirmed that the new shared approach to review being taken by manufacturers and regulatory agencies world-wide leads to more efficient regulatory systems while allowing each country to uphold their own rigorous standards for health and environmental protection. Sulfosulfuron was assessed by the PMRA 25 percent faster than the established standard for a new active ingredient. This time saving resulted in the product being positioned for availability in the 1999 growing season. More efficiency gains can be expected as the processes of harmonization are further refined.

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The pilot project profited from previous joint-review and work-share experience gained through the NAFTA TWG, and international harmonization efforts already under way in the OECD Pesticide Programme. The sulfosulfuron experience emphasized the importance of a strong commitment to flexibility and cooperation among the international partners.

Canada and Ireland are the first OECD countries to fully register sulfosulfuron. The United States Environmental Protection Agency granted sulfosulfuron an interim registration last year and expects to grant full approval in late Winter 1999.