



## Note to CAPCO

C90-14

### Use of "Natural/Naturel" and "Organic/Biologique" on Pesticide Labels

#### AISSUE

The Pesticides Directorate has been receiving an increasing number of requests to accept pesticide labels which use the terms "natural" and "organic" and their french equivalents, "naturel" et "biologique". Generally, these enquiries are framed in the context of labelling for pest control products which would be used on foods that are produced without the use of synthetic chemicals (e.g., organic farming).

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*Ce bulletin d'information est préparé par le Secrétariat à  
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## CONSIDERATIONS

The same question has also emerged within the broader context of food labelling. In this case, an Ad Hoc Committee on Natural and Organic Food was established in August 1989 to identify pertinent options and to formulate recommendations regarding the role of governments in that aspect of agriculture pertaining to "natural" and "organic" agri-food products. The Ad Hoc Committee on Natural and Organic Food, reporting to the Canadian Agricultural Research Council (CARC), has recommended that the Departmental position should be as follows:

1. No further consideration should be given to the use of the terms "natural/naturel". These terms have been used in so many instances that they have no precise meaning and do not convey any useful information.
2. The terms "organic/biologique" have a precise meaning and refer to a particular kind of production methodology. These terms should not be linked with the quality or safety of food products.

The Committee will continue working towards the development of standards of production and certification; the elaboration of appropriate legislation; and the establishment of a mechanism to ensure responsible implementation and enforcement of the standards. An Organic Advisory Board is to be formed to further this development.

### Labelling Guidelines for Pesticides

In line with departmental policy, the terms "natural/naturel" will no longer be considered acceptable on pesticide labels.

On the other hand, the terms "organic/biologique" can be considered in the context of a particular kind of production technology. However the production system must be defined and characterized before hand (i.e., organic production standards must be established). Appropriate pesticide labelling guidelines can then be developed and proposed, for consultation, via a R-Memorandum. Until these prerequisite steps have been taken, the terms "organic" and "biologique" will not be accepted on pesticide labels.

One exception to this rule exists. Since "biologique" also means "biological", when used in the context of M.P.C.A. (Microbiological Pest Control Agents) the word "biologique" will be accepted.

The terms "natural/naturel" and "organic/biologique" have, over time, been used on pesticide labels in an ad hoc fashion. This situation will remain status quo for existing products or re-brands (Private Labels or Master Copies) of them until organic production standards are established and the subsequent pesticide labelling guidelines developed.

Interested parties may wish to propose wording that might be useful in pesticide labelling, such as, "for use in organic food production systems". Proposals may be forwarded directly to the Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Dr. I.R. Sutherland, Food Inspection Directorate, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0C5.

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