

## Pesticides regulator restricts use of fruit-fly control agent

**The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued new instructions that restrict the use of the pesticide fenthion on a number of food crops due to potential short term dietary risks.**



Credit: Liese Coulter/scienceimage

Fenthion is a broad spectrum organophosphorus insecticide used to control fruit fly and other pests of stonefruit, citrus and tomatoes, as well as some animal parasites and even pest birds.

The announcement follows the release of the 2012 Fenthion *Residues and Dietary Risk Assessment Report* in September, which found that its use on many crops could exceed the recommended public health standard.

New label instructions reduce the amount of fenthion that can be used on some crops, and prohibit its use on specific fruits and vegetables, which mitigates the potential health risks identified in the residues report. The new instructions also prohibit the use of fenthion on all fruit and vegetables grown in the home garden.

‘When a regulator makes a finding relating to the potential health risks to the population, the community expects that immediate action is taken, which we have done by suspending specific uses today’, said APVMA’s Dr Raj Bhula.

‘We understand that some user industries may find it difficult to adjust to the restricted uses of this chemical, which is why we have been consulting broadly with these groups.’

The new use instructions will be in place for 12 months while the environment and occupational health and safety components of the review are completed. This follows publication of an APVMA report that found a two to six-year-old child eating certain fruits and vegetables treated with the chemical may be exposed to residues higher than

the public health standard.

ABC Rural News recently reported that the peak vegetable growers group, Ausveg, has asked the Federal Government to help find alternatives to the growing list of banned chemicals. Ausveg has drawn up a list of eight pesticides that are banned or facing suspension, including fenthion.

In other news from APVMA, the Authority has announced the release of an iPhone application that makes information about agricultural and veterinary chemicals registered in Australia accessible in the field.

The tool, thought to be a world first, will give farmers the ability to access a searchable database of the 10,500 agricultural and veterinary chemicals approved for use in Australia.

Source: APVMA & ABC

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