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Ohio State University Extension Vegetable Crops

Gore Wants E.P.A. to Ease Pesticide Evaluation Process

From: a New York Times Article, April 8, 1998, provided by John Impson USDA by way of Joanne Kick-Raack OSU-PAT.

WASHINGTON -- Vice President Al Gore, trying to mollify an anxious agriculture industry, is ordering the Environmental Protection Agency to revamp the process it uses to decide whether pesticides are dangerous to children.

His directive follows an escalating lobbying campaign by the agriculture and chemical industries and their allies in Congress, who have complained that the EPA is too zealous in carrying out a food safety law that Congress passed unanimously in 1996.

Administration officials said Gore's directive was aimed not at reining in the EPA, but at defending the law from attack by engaging both the industry and the agency's environmentalist critics more fully in the law's implementation.

"We are not trying to rewrite the law, to weaken it or to push the EPA in one direction or another," a White House official said. "But we want everyone at the table, so the industry is not driven with hysterical screeds to the Hill." The 1996 law gave the EPA more authority over common agricultural chemicals used on crops, and for the first time required the EPA to consider the risks of neurological damage to children from exposure to pesticides, and if necessary, ban their use.

Industry officials have said they are worried that the EPA appears to be determined to remove some pesticides from the market.

"The problem we have had from the start is that the EPA seems to be more intent on revoking, rather than asking for new data and making time-limited decisions while the data comes in," said George Rolofson, senior vice president for government affairs at the American Crop Protection Association, an industry group.

But the White House's intervention has raised concerns among some environmental advocates, who warned that it might slow down the EPA while it faces an August 1999 deadline for reviewing hundreds of pesticides.

Aides to Gore, for whom environmentalists are a key political constituency, redrafted the memorandum this week in ways that appeared to have addressed some of the environmentalists' concerns.

"I have a hard time concluding that it is a major sellout, or even any kind of sellout," said Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, a leading advocacy group working for stricter pesticide regulations.

Even so, Gore's memorandum reminds the EPA that it has some discretion in how to apply its new powers under the Food Quality Protection Act, sending a signal to the agency at a time when it is under heavy pressure from a powerful industry.

Officials said Gore and his aides became intensely involved after Rep. Charles Stenholm of Texas, the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, met with Gore to voice concerns over the law's implementation.

Administration officials said that Gore was expected to deliver his directive as early as Wednesday in a four-page memorandum to EPA Administrator Carol Browner. It directs the EPA to work with the Agriculture Department, whose views are much closer to the farm and pesticides industries, when reviewing whether to approve new pesticides or to allow the continued use of existing ones. Gore also instructs the EPA to be sure to involve interest groups and outside scientific reviewers as it makes the decisions.

Crop Reports

Hal Kneen, Bill Evans).

Southeast.

Cabbage plantings were finished about 2 weeks ago and all plantings are looking good. The frequent rains have helped the crop with many fields containing plants that are 4-6 inches across. Sweet corn under plastic is now 3-4 inches tall in some locations and bare ground plantings are up about 1 inch. Sweet corn planting continues in several locations. Bed preparation and the laying of plastic mulch and trickle irrigation have begun in anticipation of the tomato planting season. An estimated 30% of the tomato acreage, this year, will be under plastic and trickle irrigation. Some beds were formed as early as two weeks ago. If the mild weather continues, some of the first tomato transplanting may begin around April 24. Soil temperatures at Pomeroy, 4 inch depth, were at 58 degrees. Pepper transplants in greenhouses are looking good but aphids are a problem in some locations especially where weeds are in or near the greenhouse. Growers in other areas should be scouting their transplants for aphids and other pests.

Northcentral.

Two field plantings of parsley for a carrot weevil damage study have been made at the Muck Crops branch. The spring lettuce cultivar trial, with over 100 replicated and observational entries, is up and growing in the greenhouse. A dozen leek entries are also up and growing. Most area winter cover crops have been sprayed with glyphosate. Plowing and planting are ahead of schedule. Dry onions, lettuce, radishes and parsley are all up and growing on area fields. Rains have been moderate and timely, allowing weekly planting and good stand establishment. Soils are running in the low 50s at 4 inches, hitting over 70 at 2 inches on warm, sunny days.

The 7 & 10 Day Outlook

Temperature:

For Cincinnati on 25 Apr: high 65, low 48; 27 Apr: high 70, low 60; 29 Apr: high 68, low 60.

For Columbus on 25 Apr: high 60, low 50; 27 Apr: high 65, low 55; 29 Apr: high 65, low 58.

For Cleveland on 25 Apr: high 62, low 50; 27 Apr: high 65, low 55; 29 Apr: high 65, low 60.

Precipitation

For Cincinnati from 17 Apr to 19 Apr: 0.85"; from 19 Apr to 22 Apr: 0.12"; from 23 Apr to 25 Apr: 0.05".

For Columbus from 17 Apr to 19 Apr: 0.8-0.9"; from 19 Apr to 22 Apr: 0.2"; from 23 Apr to 25 Apr: 0.13".

For Cleveland from 17 Apr to 19 Apr: 0.75"; from 19 Apr to 22 Apr: 0.05-0.1"; from 23 Apr to 25 Apr: 0.1-0.2".

(From NWS, OSU, COLA and WXP-Purdue)

What's New At The VegNet Web Site

Check Out the New Look of the Tomcast Section (requires your browser to be able to view frames.)

+ A New Tomato Research Report by C. A. Wyenandt, R. M. Riedel, M. Bennett and C. Welty.

From The Vegetable Crops Planner: Links now provided to the National Weather Service Offices in Cleveland and Wilmington, OH. Provides Agricultural Observations, soil temperatures, climate summaries, growing degree days and much more.

1998 Ohio Vegetable Production Guide - Online. Visit: "The Library

Bee Keeping Links to fact sheets including the new "Protecting Honey Bees from Pesticides, HYG-2161-97" by Dr. Jim Tew. Visit: "The Library

Vegetable Budgets. Link to Univ. of KY, Ag Economics for vegetable production budgets.. Visit: "The Library

Return to Vegetable Crops Homepage Ohio State University Extension

We appreciate very much the financial support for this series of vegetable reports which we have received from the board of growers responsible for the Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit research and Development Program. This is an example of use of Funds from the "Assessment Program".

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Ohio State University Extension is implied. Although every attempt is made to produce information that is complete, timely and accurate, the pesticide user bears the responsibility of consulting the pesticide label and adhering to those directions.

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