2001

Protecting People and the Environment

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDE REGULATION

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A year of hope and heartache

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS: You can't control what the world hands you, but you can decide how you're going to deal with it. That philosophy certainly proved fitting in 2001.

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) began the year on a high note. We celebrated the 100th anniversary of pesticide law in California as we marked progress on a wide range of initiatives supported by the Davis Administration. Our new Pest Management and Licensing Branch shifted into high gear with efforts to encourage reduced-risk pest management in schools, homes, and on the farm. Our Registration Branch stepped up work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to bring "softer" pesticides to market faster.

Meanwhile, the Worker Health and Safety Branch staff was completing an extensive review of compliance with our rules to protect field workers, and our scientists in the Medical Toxicology Branch moved ahead on risk assessments for fumigants and other high-priority pesticides.

The Environmental Monitoring Branch prepared to launch a new, preventive approach to protecting ground water. Our Enforcement Branch completed an assessment of statewide compliance with pesticide laws and regulations, in cooperation with our local partners, the County Agricultural Commissioners. And we began to enhance DPR business services using the latest, most efficient technology. These and other accomplishments also were a tribute to the hard work of our staff and managers, and supportive members of the Legislature.

Then came the tragic events of September 11. DPR and other State agencies immediately mobilized against potential threats of terrorism in California. In cooperation with the FBI, we quickly checked thousands of licensee records to confirm that no known terrorists had credentials to buy highly toxic pesticides — or fly the aircraft used to apply them. DPR staffers also helped with State emergency response efforts. And true to form, our employees went the extra mile. To support New York firefighters, Registration Branch staffers sponsored a raffle that raised more than $3,100 from donors throughout the headquarters of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

As 2001 came to a close, we prepared for more challenges, including a State deficit that will require careful and creative budget planning in 2002. Despite these difficult times, our priorities will remain the same — enforce pesticide laws and regulations, safeguard the health of workers and others exposed to pesticides, and fulfill other responsibilities mandated by the Legislature. Whatever challenges may lie ahead, we'll find a way to deal with them as we continue the work of protecting Californians and our environment.

Paul Helliker

Paul E. Helliker
Director

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