

DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDE REGULATION

James W. Wells, Director



1020 N Street, Room 100
Sacramento, California 95814-5624

March 8, 1995

TO: COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONERS
IN RICE-GROWING COUNTIES OF THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

SUBJECT: 1995 RICE PESTICIDES PROGRAM

On January 27, 1995, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) approved management practices that limit discharges of the rice pesticides molinate (Ordram®), thiobencarb (Bolero® and Abolish®), carbofuran (Furadan®), methyl parathion, and malathion to surface waters. The CVRWQCB staff sent you a copy of the agenda item for this meeting along with a report prepared by my staff entitled: "Information on Rice Pesticides Submitted to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board" (December 28, 1995). This letter contains details on the 1995 rice pesticide program including conditions you are asked to implement for rice pesticide permits.

Most of the provisions of the rice pesticide program relating to routine water-holding times will remain the same as in 1994. However, changes will apply for regions previously considered hydrologically isolated to ensure compliance with the CVRWQCB's prohibition of acutely toxic discharges to waters that support aquatic habitat.

In addition, the CVRWQCB approved management plans to promote an educational effort with the rice-growing community that stresses the continued importance of drift prevention and introduces the potential contributions seepage water makes to the pesticide concentrations in the agricultural drains. Drift control provisions remain as they were in 1994. Continue to have your staff impress upon commercial applicators the need to better control applications of pesticides near agricultural drains and focus additional enforcement efforts, when possible, on aerial applications made to fields adjacent to agricultural drains. My



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staff is working with representatives from the rice-growing community to propose voluntary measures growers might take to prevent rice field seepage water from entering surface waterways prior to the end of the required holding periods for field water. Your assistance in distributing forthcoming information to growers on seepage water containment will be appreciated.

The key features of the 1995 program are as follows:

1. The basic water management requirements for users of those pesticides that require permits (molinate, thiobencarb, methyl parathion, and carbofuran) are the same as in 1994. The water management requirements for the 1995 program as approved by the CVRWQCB are outlined in Attachments 1-4. Holding times for all applications (not just the "preflood surface" applications) of Abolish decreased to 19 days. Areas considered hydrologically isolated must hold water from fields treated with molinate and thiobencarb for longer periods (11 and 19 days, respectively) than previously required. Exceptions for some fields treated with thiobencarb are described in Attachment 2.
2. The water management practices following malathion use in rice are still voluntary. Attachment 5, which describes these practices, was designed to be distributed to growers.
3. Management practices for containing seepage water from rice fields and the pesticides this water may contain will be addressed through forthcoming educational measures and implemented through voluntary efforts by growers.
4. Water management practices within closed systems remain the same for 1995. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) will conduct a study on toxicity of water in multigrower closed systems to determine any need for longer holds in future years.

5. The emergency release provisions remain the same as in 1994 to continue to meet the CVRWQCB's prohibition of acutely toxic discharges to waters that support aquatic habitat. Growers with fields treated with Ordram may apply for an emergency release after a minimum holding period of 11 days. Fields will be prohibited from using the emergency release management option until the standard holding times for the insecticides have elapsed. Fields treated with Bolero do not qualify for the emergency release option. Attachment 6 is the form which permittees are to fill out as part of their request for an emergency release. Those that are granted an emergency release must also fill out an additional form (Attachment 7) and deliver it to your office. Failure to submit this form will be considered a permit violation. DPR staff will request the information on the completed forms later this summer.
6. Growers using the emergency release provision more than once or cited for water holding violations more than once must make improvements in water management capabilities. Such improvements will be required as conditions on future pesticide use permits and may include retention basins, ponds, or tailwater recovery systems.
7. Drift control provisions will again be an important part of the program. Methyl parathion application provisions are the same as in 1994. They include the use of an effective drift control agent, use of D8 nozzles, wind speeds \leq 5 miles per hour, and a 300-foot downwind buffer zone left untreated. Attachments 8, 9, 10, and 11 outline the provisions for aerial applications of granular and liquid formulations of rice pesticides included in the program. Special attention should be directed, when possible, towards enforcement efforts during aerial applications at sites adjacent to agricultural drains.
8. Weir boxes that control discharges of water from rice fields shall be fully secured during pesticide holding times. A soil berm must be in place in front of each of these boxes

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to a level above the water line, or drop boxes shall be filled with soil to a level above the water line. The need for such berms in fields where nonconventional water management systems are utilized, e.g., static/positive pressure systems, may be evaluated by County Agricultural Commissioner's office staff on a case-by-case basis.

Information transmittal of rice pesticide use data from the county offices to DPR will be handled at the end of July rather than on a weekly basis. My staff will discuss the details of this process with your deputies.

Monitoring results will not be available this year until approximately five weeks after sample collection. DPR will continue to send monitoring program results to your offices, via facsimile, when available.

Thank you for your assistance. Your cooperation continues to help make the program a real success. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Nan Gorder at (916) 324-4265 or Mr. Marshall Lee at (916) 324-4269.

Sincerely,



James W. Wells
Director
(916) 445-4000

cc: Dr. Nan Gorder
Mr. Marshall Lee