
THE EMERGENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT IN LATIN AMERICA: AN INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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The assessment of plant protection products (PPPs) for safety to the environment has always been part of the process in obtaining the “permission to sell” (i.e., a registration) in Latin America. Globally, environmental safety evaluations involving risk assessment have become more common than hazard based approaches. In other words there is a trend away from simply making decisions based on the toxicity, mobility, environmental residence time, to a more science-based risk approach that also considers the benefits that are derived from PPPs.

To conduct a risk assessment, the same data sets currently submitted to regulators (e.g., physical/chemical information, environmental fate and ecotoxicology data) are combined with product use data (e.g., mg or kg of product used to treat a hectare unit of crop), and conservative soil and climate data to generate an estimate of exposure. This exposure assessment involves the use of regulatory agreed upon exposure models to provide a predicted exposure estimate for both soil and waters (i.e., ground and surface waters). These estimates are then compared to the toxicity data for indicator organisms in the various environmental compartments taking into consideration the protection goal that is mandated.

While it may be easier to use “cut-off” criteria, this is not a science based approach. While moving from a hazard to a risk based approach does require development of new approaches and tools, it is easily achievable.

The presentation will discuss CropLife’s position on the safety evaluation of PPPs and will include a discussion of assessments:

- based on sound science,
- using a risk based approach,
- using globally accepted test methods (e.g., OECD or equivalent),
- based on mutual acceptance of test end-points (e.g., global joint reviews, OECD), and
- based on general agreement on risk assessment methodology (risk based on a comparison of toxicity and exposure to achieve a protection goal).

To demonstrate how such an approach can be developed to meet country or regional needs, an example of a cooperative effort in Colombia between the Colombian Environmental Agency and the industry will be presented. We will also discuss what the industry considers to be “good regulatory” practices in the area of risk assessment.