

AGRICULTURE

EPA proceeds with ban on carbofuran

WASHINGTON – The Environmental Protection Agency announced in October that it will begin implementing a rule banning use of the pesticide carbofuran.

In May 2009, EPA revoked carbofuran tolerances after performing a risk assessment and determining the chemical posed unacceptable risks to farm workers near treated fields. Exposure can cause headache, sweating, nausea, diarrhea, chest pains, blurred vision, anxiety and muscle weakness.

Three grower associations and FMC Corp., which manufactures carbofuran, objected to the rule, but EPA determined the standard for an evidentiary hearing had not been met. The agency currently is taking steps to cancel carbofuran registrations. Under the rule, the pesticide may not be applied to any food crops after Dec. 31 of this year.

Go to www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/carbofuran/carbofuran_noic.htm for more information.

CONSTRUCTION

OSHA clarifies use of hi-vis in work zones

WASHINGTON – All highway and road construction workers are required to wear high-visibility garments, according to a new letter of interpretation from OSHA.

“Requiring the use of reflective vests is essential to help prevent workers from being injured or killed,” acting OSHA administrator Jordan Barab said in a press release Oct. 20.

A 2004 letter of interpretation stating that workers in highway and work zones are required to wear hi-vis apparel was limited by a 2006 Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission ruling that stated the garments need to be worn only where the Federal Highway Administration’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices mandates.

The current MUTCD requires vests only on federally funded roadways.

OSHA withdrew its previous answer in the original letter of interpretation and in the most recent letter provided “a more comprehensive answer” in requiring hi-vis apparel on all highway and road construction workers, regardless of whether the MUTCD requires them.

In writing the latest letter of interpretation, Richard Fairfax, director of OSHA’s Directorate of Enforcement Programs, said hazards to which construction workers on highways are exposed are well-recognized and would fall under the agency’s General Duty Clause.

Go to www.nsc.org/plus to read the letter of interpretation.

MINING

Senate confirms Main as MSHA head

WASHINGTON – The Senate on Oct. 21 unanimously confirmed Joseph A. Main as Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

A former miner, Main directed the health and safety department for the United Mine Workers of America and has testified before Congress about mining disasters.

President Barack Obama nominated Main in July.

MSHA warns 10 mines of potential violations

ARLINGTON, VA – The Mine Safety and Health Administration notified 10 mine operators that each has a potential pattern of violations of mandatory health and safety standards, the agency announced in October.

FACT CHECK

