



Regular Update on Methyl Bromide Alternatives

May 2007

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## NORTH AMERICA

### 1- Methyl Bromide Inventory Shrinks

EPA says stocks of the fumigant are down more than 50% since 2003

The U.S. is continuing its required phaseout of the ozone-depleting fumigant methyl bromide, with the total inventory of the compound falling from 16,422 metric tons in 2003 to 7,671 metric tons last year, according to figures released by [EPA](#) on May 14.

The data indicate "a steady decline in the aggregate methyl bromide inventory held by approximately 35 companies in the U.S. at the end of 2006," the agency says. Under the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer, developed countries were required to phase out production and import of methyl bromide by 2005, except for some limited "critical uses" in agriculture and for quarantine purposes where no feasible alternatives exist. The U.S. stock is now more than two-thirds smaller than the 25,500 metric tons inventoried in 1991, the phaseout's baseline year. "The phaseout of new production and import and the orderly reduction in the existing inventory are facilitating a transition to alternatives in a manner consistent with previous successful phaseouts of ozone-depleting substances, such as CFCs and halons," EPA says.

**SOURCE:** Chemical & Engineering News, May 17, 2007 [Glenn Hess](#)  
<http://pubs.acs.org/cen/news/85/i21/8521news5.html>

### 2- PAN Asking for Comments to EPA on Chloropicrin:

Chloropicrin is a PAN "Bad Actor" fumigant pesticide used in agriculture to sterilize the soil before planting. It is often mixed with methyl bromide, another fumigant pesticide that causes depletion of the ozone layer, because unlike methyl bromide it has a strong tear gas odor. Chloropicrin can cause short-term skin and respiratory irritations, and long-term respiratory health problems. On October 5th, 2005, sixty people, including the emergency personnel who came to rescue them, were sickened by a chloropicrin cloud that had drifted a quarter mile from a strawberry field in Salinas, California. EPA has opened a public comment period on chloropicrin. PANNA is asking people who live or work near agricultural areas to tell EPA their experiences and concerns with this dangerous chemical being used in their community. Comments must be received no later than January 29th. Click here to find out how to submit comments. Read more about fumigant pesticides.

**SOURCE:** PANUPS updates service, <http://www.panna.org>

### 3- CBP to Assess Fines for Violation of the Wood Packaging Import Regulations

WASHINGTON, March 8 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Effective Friday March, 9, U.S. Customs and Border Protection may issue claims for liquidated damages and/or penalties against importers, carriers or bonded custodians for importing wood packaging material (WPM) in

violation of the regulations.

Liquidated damages result from a breach of obligation under bond. When violations occur, liquidated damages and/or penalties will be assessed based on the value of the merchandise, which is considered the value of the WPM plus the value of the commodity or commodities identified for importation on the entry documentation. The liquidated damages claim may be issued at three times the entered value of the merchandise but not greater than the bond amount.

The WPM regulations have been in full enforcement since July 5, 2006 and was implemented in a three-phase approach to ensure that the trade is fully informed. The regulations require all WPM entering or transiting through the United States to be properly marked to indicate that it has been either heat treated or treated with methyl bromide in accordance with the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (ISPM 15), and be free of timber pests.

Immediate exportation is required of any noncompliant WPM. This includes WPM that is unmarked, inappropriately marked, or marked but found infested with a live wood-boring pest of the families Cerambycidae, Buprestidae, Siricidae, Cossidae, Curculionidae, Platypodidae, Sesiidae and Scolytidae. All costs associated with the handling of violative WPM, including the cost of exportation, are the responsibility of the violator.

For more information on the implementation and enforcement of the WPM regulations and related guidelines on liquidated damages and penalties, please visit the CBP website at [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial\\_enforcement/wpm/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial_enforcement/wpm/)

**SOURCE:** U.S. Customs and Border Protection

## **SOUTH EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC**

### **4- Burglar's Life in Peril**

A burglar may be in need of urgent medical help after exposing himself to the risk of inhaling potentially lethal gas during a Melbourne break-in.

Police said while they believed the burglar did not get away with any goods from the west Melbourne transport business he entered about 2.45am yesterday, he cut a tarpaulin covering a container of a pest control gas, methyl bromide.

It was unknown if the burglar realised he had been exposed to the gas.

Police said if exposure was left untreated, it could be fatal.

**SOURCE:** The Border Morning Mail, 17 March 2007,

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/news/bm/national/704871.html>

### **5- Substitute Sought for Fumigant**

*Investigations underway to find replacement for fumigant methyl bromide after reports on its use at Port of Nelson*

The fumigant methyl bromide could be on its way out following reports into its use at the Port of Nelson.

The courts have released previously confidential documents stating that levels of the chemical, which is used at the port to fumigate export timber, may have exceeded safety standards for the air quality of surrounding residential areas. A group of widows believe their husbands who worked at the port died from motor neurone disease after being exposed to the toxic gas.

Environment Minister David Benson-Pope says methyl bromide is an ozone-damaging gas and is being phased out around the world. It is also used by strawberry growers to sterilise soil but the industry has been told it will have no further exemptions for its use.

Mr Benson-Pope says investigations are underway in New Zealand and in Australia, to find a replacement for the fumigant.

**SOURCE:** NZCity News, 30 March 2007 <http://home.nzcity.co.nz/news/default.aspx?id=71693>

## **WEST ASIA**

## 6- Yemen Contributes to Ozone Protection

SANA'A, March 4 - Yemen is seeking to help protect the Ozone layer from depletion by boosting agriculture, which depends on Methyl Bromide alternatives. According to the head of the Ozone Unit at the General Authority for Environment Protection, Faisal Nasser, the risks of ultraviolet rays include the increased probability of skin cancer. The possibility of this harm increases with the continuing depletion of the Ozone layer. Scientists believe that when the Ozone layer depletes by one percent, the potential for contracting skin cancer increases by two percent. Nasser indicated that chemical materials used by factories, including sponge factories, together with CFCs are considered to be among the primary causes adding to the probable risks. He further noted that Yemeni investors maintain an appropriate level of environmental awareness and further stated that investors in [foam] production have replaced those materials used by others which affect Ozone layer and have done so without any help from the United Nations Development Program.

Nasser further asserted that it is our duty to praise such people who contribute to the protection of the Ozone layer and environmental health, as they replace harmful materials, whether those used in agriculture or in industry.

Sa'ada governorate ranks first within Yemen for using Methyl Bromide alternatives, which help to protect the Ozone layer. This situation was achieved after many farmers received training from the Ozone Unit.

**SOURCE:** Yemen Times, <http://yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1030&p=local&a=3%20>

## EUROPE

### 7- Telone Stays - for Now at Least

Telone II, a contractor-applied liquid soil fumigant used to control **potato cyst nematodes (PCN)**, and elsewhere in Europe as a methyl bromide alternative, will be available until at least March 2009.

That's the reassurance from maker **Dow Agrosciences** after a recent **EU decision** not to grant Annex 1 listing to 1,3-Dichloropropene, the nematicide's active ingredient.

The company says it intends to submit more data as soon as possible to lift 1,3-D onto Annex 1 before the product is due to be taken off the market, and so maintain its long-term use.

About 60% of arable land in potato rotations is infested to some degree by PCN, noted the **BPC's** Mike Storey. "That's about 80,000ha."

With **Temik (aldicarb) no longer approved**, retaining plenty of PCN control measures is important, he said.

"We need to maintain a range of nematicides and nematostats for use in integrated programmes in GB."

Other measures include resistant varieties, rotations and trap cropping.

Unlike granular chemical options, which only suppress infestations, Telone II kills nematodes over their extended hatching period, Dr Storey pointed out.

"Telone is used on 20-30% of the infested land, and BPC has been supportive of the application to retain 1,3-D for use on potatoes.

"We hope Dow will be successful in its re-application."

PCN infestations cost the UK industry about £50m a year, according to the company.

"Telone II will be available until at least spring 2009 and possibly autumn 2010," said the firm's John Sellars. "It is hoped that with resources secured, Annex 1 inclusion will be achieved before these dates."

**SOURCE:** Farmers Weekly Interactive, 5 June 2007, by Andrew Blake

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2007/06/05/104176/telone-stays-for-now-at-least.html>

The United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (UNEP DTIE) OzonAction Programme provides R U M B A as a free service to promote information exchange and stimulate discussion about methyl bromide phase out under the Montreal Protocol. The goal of R U M B A is to provide information, stimulate discussion and promote co-operation in support of

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