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Consumer Product Safety

Evaluation of Pesticide Incident Report 2008-0736

Background

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) collects incident reporting data under the authority of the Pest Control Products Act. If a pesticide manufacturer receives information about an incident involving one of their products, they are required by law to submit that information to the PMRA. All submitted incident reports are made publicly available on the Health Canada website, specifically, on the PMRA [Public Registry](#). It is important to note that the information presented in incident reports reflects the observations and opinion of the person reporting it, and does not include any assessment by Health Canada, nor does it confirm an association between the pesticide and the effects reported.

Health Canada considers the reported information to determine if there are potential health or environmental risks associated with a pesticide and, if necessary, takes corrective action. Such action could range from minor label changes to discontinuation of the product.

Incident Report 2008-0736

Scotts Canada Ltd. received information about an incident related to one of their products, which they submitted to the PMRA in February 2008. The information contained in the incident report indicates that the subject had previously applied the product Killex (non-specific) over a period of one month or more in an attempt to control a poison ivy infestation. The specific Killex product used was unknown, but the active ingredients involved were 2,4-D, dicamba and mecoprop-p, which are typically diluted to low levels (<1%) prior to application. In addition, the details pertaining to the exposure were not reported (for example, if exposure occurred during application). The subject was recently diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) and was under the care of a medical team. In accordance with the Incident Reporting Regulations classification system, the incident was classified as Human Major.

As required by the Pest Control Products Incident Reporting Regulations, Scotts Canada Ltd., submitted the incident report to the PMRA and it is posted on the PMRA electronic [Public Registry](#) on the Health Canada website.

Health Canada Evaluation

There is limited evidence linking exposure to 2,4-D, dicamba or mecoprop-p to significant neurological impairment. Minimal signs of neurotoxicity have been demonstrated in laboratory animals only after being dosed directly by the oral route with very high levels of these active ingredients. Muscle weakness and peripheral neuropathy have been reported in humans working with 2,4-D or mecoprop-p in occupational scenarios, but these are not typical signs of overexposure to these active ingredients. Results from epidemiological studies examining the relationship between chemical exposure and the development of ALS have been inconsistent and thus inconclusive. Several different risk factors potentially involved in the development of ALS have been identified, including genetic factors, sex, age, and exposure to chemicals such as heavy metals, formaldehyde and cigarette smoke.

There is no physical evidence available, in this incident, to confirm that exposure to the active ingredients 2,4-D, dicamba and mecoprop-p occurred. The ALS experienced by the individual, as

indicated in the report, does not appear to be consistent with the known symptoms of overexposure to the active ingredients 2,4-D, dicamba or mecoprop-p. Therefore, based on the information available in the incident report it is concluded that it is **unlikely** (where the effect reported is not typical for the suspected pesticide but the possibility that exposure to the pesticide caused the effect cannot be ruled out) that the major effect noted in this incident (ALS) was related to the reported exposure to 2,4-D, dicamba and mecoprop-p.

Health Canada Conclusion

The PMRA has evaluated this incident and concluded that, based on the toxicological profile of the active ingredients 2,4-D, dicamba and mecoprop-p, the exposure to a pesticide product containing these active ingredients is not expected to result in ALS. The information as noted in the incident will remain in the database and will be routinely re-examined in conjunction with any new data that is received. It is important to note that a product is only registered for use if there is reasonable certainty that no harm will result from exposure to or use of the product as directed on the label.

More information about the [Incident Reporting Program](#) is available on Health Canada's website. Should you require further information please contact the [Pesticide Incident Reporting Program](#).

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