Australian Government
Department of Agriculture

SECRETARY

Ref: EXEC2014-00397

Mr Tim Watling
Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Watling

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture welcomes the opportunity to provide the attached submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee inquiry into implications of the use of fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry.

The department's submission compliments a separate submission by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority which addresses the technical basis for its decision to restrict certain uses of fenthion.

The department's submission explains the framework for the regulation of agricultural and veterinary chemicals, including the specific responsibilities of the department and the Minister. The submission details the department's efforts to assist industry in preparing for restrictions on fenthion.

I trust that the information in the submission will assist the committee with its inquiry. Departmental officers will be available to attend, if requested, any Committee hearing.

Yours sincerely

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Australian Government

Department of Agriculture

SENATE RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the implications of the use of fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry

SUBMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

JANUARY 2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture (the department) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee inquiry into implications of the use of fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry.

1.1 Fenthion

Fenthion is a broad spectrum organophosphorus insecticide used in horticulture, home gardens and domestic and industrial pest control. Fenthion has been an important part of fruit fly control in many areas of Australia. It has been used as a quarantine treatment on tropical and subtropical fruit and fruiting vegetables, to eradicate fruit fly before interstate trade. Fenthion is also used to control external parasites on cattle and pest birds around buildings. It first came into use internationally in 1965. Since the mid to late 1990's fenthion use on food producing plants has been phased out in a number of countries and is now no longer registered for use on food producing plants in the European Union, USA, Canada, or New Zealand.

2 THE REGULATION OF PESTICIDES AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS

Responsibility for regulation of pesticides and veterinary chemicals is shared between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the independent, national regulator that has responsibility for registration of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals, allowing use in Australia. The APVMA regulates agvet chemicals up to and including the point of sale. It approves the product label, which sets how chemicals can be used, including: frequency of use, concentration to apply, application methods, occupational health and safety directions and other requirements for applying the chemical. The APVMA is making a separate submission to this inquiry providing further details of its role and activities.

APVMA seeks expert scientific input from the Department of Health and the Department of Environment. The Department of Health provides human health risk assessments and set public health standards for agvet chemicals, including fenthion. The APVMA and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) use these public health standards to set the limits for agvet chemical residues on food. The Department of the Environment provides environmental risk assessments.

The state and territory governments are responsible for regulating agvet chemicals after the point of sale, specifically ensuring that agvet chemicals are used legally, according to the specifications set by the APVMA, and that users are appropriately trained and licensed.

Attachment 1 details the responsibilities for regulation of pesticides and veterinary chemicals.

3 IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE

Under Australia's system of government, powers and responsibilities for various issues potentially affecting Australian agriculture are shared between the Commonwealth, state, territory, local governments and industry. Under both the Australian Constitution and the *Quarantine Act 1908*, the Commonwealth is responsible for matters relating to the Australian border including development and enforcement of quarantine measures for imported goods and for activities undertaken on Commonwealth lands.

- The department continues to test for fenthion in imported commodities under the *Imported Food Inspection Scheme*, with no detections in the last five years of fenthion above the national standards prescribed in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

At the international level, the department also has responsibility for ensuring Australia's pest and disease status meet our international obligations. In this regard, the Commonwealth negotiates the biosecurity conditions and operational protocols for international market access for agricultural commodities that maximise trade while meeting importing country requirements. Where changes in production systems or potential quarantine concerns held by Australia's trading partners threaten to impact market access, the department works to minimise or prevent impacts to market access.

There is a negligible impact on international market access of Australian agricultural products as a result of restrictions on the use of fenthion. Exports of fresh horticulture products account for 7.4 per cent of the total value of horticulture production ($9.0 billion). Although controlling fruit fly is important to enable export market access of many commodities being traded internationally, the use of fenthion is limited as a quarantine treatment (many countries ban fenthion and there is only one export market requiring fenthion treatment—choko to New Caledonia[1]). The potential impact of banning fenthion is therefore primarily on domestic trade.

Nationally, the department has broader interests in advancing Australia's agriculture industry and plays a national leadership role and manages government funding for research and development. It is these latter areas that the department actively progressed support to growers using fenthion and to pre-emptively prepare for restrictions on fenthion use that were emerging internationally and limit the impact on domestic industries. The department's efforts in these areas are described in sections 4 and 5 of this submission. Whilst there has been impact on individual growers[2], the efforts of the department have assisted in reducing the overall consequences for industry. In addition, alternative control measures and interstate trade requirements are continuing to be developed.

4 THE DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY AND STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS IN PREPARING FOR POTENTIAL RESTRICTIONS ON FENTHION

The APVMA's review into fenthion has occurred concurrently with a review into another chemical used in Australia for in-field and post-harvest control of fruit fly – dimethoate. These reviews commenced in 1998 and 2004 respectively, due to concerns about human health, residues in food, the environment and trade. Recognising that a number of domestic and international quarantine protocols included the use of one of these two chemicals, either in-field or post-harvest, the Chief Plant Health Managers from the Australian Government and state and territory governments worked to identify potential disruptions to market access arrangements and to identify ways to minimise those disruptions. These initial activities were conducted through the Plant Health Committee which comprises the Chief Plant Health Managers from the Australian Government and the state and territory governments, along with a number of observers. The focus of this work was to assist industries prepare alternatives to both of these chemicals in order to secure the best possible outcomes for both international and domestic market access.

[1] Based on department records choko exports are very low and there were no exports recorded to New Caledonia in 2012/13.
[2] http://www.summerfruit.com.au/Resources/PDF/Australian-Stonefruit-Grower---February-March-2013.aspx

Fenthion has limited use as a quarantine treatment for international trade. Therefore, there have been no significant impacts on international market access associated with additional restrictions placed on the use of fenthion[3]. However, fenthion has been used as a quarantine treatment in a number of domestic movement conditions. The Plant Health Committee recognised the implications of the potential loss of various registrations of fenthion, particularly post-harvest, would have been disruptive to interstate markets due to an inability to meet quarantine conditions and so facilitated the development of pragmatic and practical initiatives to support industry to move to alternative arrangements.

As a key part of the process to prepare for the outcomes of the fenthion review, the Plant Health Committee formed the Dimethoate and Fenthion Task Force to identify potential impacts from any regulatory changes to the permitted uses of dimethoate and/or fenthion and to put in place processes to minimise the impact of any changes. This task force first met in February 2007. It is important to note that this was pre-emptive work as the outcomes from the APVMA review were not yet known at that time. However, some potential impacts were recognised to be possible on the basis of project work commissioned earlier by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL).

Subsequent to this initial meeting the department appointed a full time dimethoate-fenthion review coordinator. The National Coordinator provided the focal point, drive and leadership to achieve the adoption and implementation of a range of measures to provide alternatives to some of the uses of dimethoate and fenthion. The Coordinator communicated extensively with industry and government stakeholders on plant health, scientific and technical information and priorities through meetings, conferences and articles in industry newsletters.

Consistent with whole-of-government responsibilities and jurisdiction, these discussions focussed on the impacts to regulate trade, both domestically and internationally. Where the in-field use of a specific chemical was required for meeting a trade protocol, the discussions included how alternative systems might be implemented to provide a similar level of confidence to an interstate or international trading partner.

These alternatives included development and approval of post-harvest options such as treatment and inspection, and the implementation of additional in-field controls and systems approach to ensure fruit fly pressures in the field were managed and the risks posed by interstate movement of fresh fruit were minimised. As a direct result of these efforts a number of new integrated systems based on international standards and agreed national policies have been developed which have supported on-going domestic and international trade. These systems include:

- recognition of the seasonal nature of fruit fly infestation in strawberries from south eastern Queensland

[3] However, dimethoate was used as a quarantine treatment for international trade to New Zealand and the Pacific. Due to additional restrictions placed on the use of dimethoate in late 2010, the department negotiated alternative trading arrangements where required (e.g. irradiation of tomatoes and capsicums).

- an agreement to allow movement of glasshouse grown tomatoes between New South Wales and the rest of Australia
- recognition of a systems approach to managing fruit fly that enables movement of tomatoes and capsicums grown in the Bowen-Gumlu region to other regions of Australia.

The processes through the Plant Health Committee were ongoing and iterative. Table 1 presents a summary of domestic uses of fenthion considered 'at risk' as presented to Plant Health Committee in June 2012, possible outcomes of the APVMA review based on best available information, and actions that may be required to support some form of ongoing use. This work was undertaken by HAL to provide a focus for research and development. It was provided to the Plant Health Committee for information.

Table 1: Summary of possible 'at risk' uses and potential outcomes presented at Plant Health Committee 41 (6-8 June 2012), based on available knowledge at the time and anticipated review processes.

Commodity	Use pattern	Potential outcome	Comment
Pre-harvest - Fenthion			
Fruiting vegetable			
Capsicum	0.41 kg Active ingredient(ai)/ha or 0.041 kg ai/hL 7 day WHP	Possible use retained	3 days – dimethoate & fenthion
Eggplant	0.41 kg ai/ha or 0.041 kg ai/hL 7 day WHP	Use suspended	Dependent upon consumption level applied.
Tomatoes	0.41 kg ai/ha or 0.041 kg ai/hL 7 day WHP	Use suspended	Potential alternative withholding period (WHP) of 28 days.
Stone fruit			
Cherries		Use suspended	Potential alternative WHP of 14 days. Additional trial data may be required.
Nectarines		Use suspended	Potential alternative WHP of 14 days. Additional trial data may be required.
Peaches		Use suspended	Potential alternative WHP of 21 days. Additional trial data would be required.
Persimmons		Use suspended	Potential alternative WHP of 14 days. Additional trial data would be required.
Pome fruit		Use suspended	14-21 days
Berry fruit			
Grapes		Use suspended	Potential alternative WHP of 14 days. Additional trial data would be required.

In addition to the activities within the Plant Health Committee and the Dimethoate and Fenthion Task Force, the department established and supported the Dimethoate and Fenthion Response Coordination Committee (DFRCC), which included representation from both governments and industry[4]. The DFRCC included the Australian Government, state and territory government agencies, industry participants (37 groups), produce exporters (2 groups), traders and retailers (14 groups), treatment providers and industry advisors (9 groups) and research bodies (5 groups)[5]. The DFRCC met monthly from December 2009 through to November 2012, after which it met quarterly to August 2013. The DFRCC now convenes as required. The purpose of the DFRCC was to oversee the implementation of the National Response Plan (developed and agreed through the DFRCC), to maintain stakeholder engagement, and to coordinate market access and research activities. The department has chaired and provided secretariat support for the DFRCC since its inception.

Factsheets and the National Response Plan prepared by the DFRCC are available on the Domestic Quarantine and Market Access Working Group website[6].

The other potential impact identified through these processes was changes to fruit fly pressures in the field should pre-harvest use of one or both of these two chemicals be restricted in some way. While these potential impacts and development of alternative treatments are not a direct responsibility of the Australian Government, or state and territory governments, the DFRCC also provided a forum to identify potential impacts and assist the affected industries identify alternative measures and necessary research activities.

Research into alternative control options has been actively supported by the Australian Government, through the provision of technical expertise and matching funding arrangements for research and development activities through HAL. An overview of some of these activities is provided in section 5. A key component of the research and development process through HAL is the identification of industry priorities for research investment with financial support from the Australian Government.

Any response to regulatory changes in the allowable uses of dimethoate and fenthion would require industry action and leadership, and the department sought to ensure affected industries were aware of potential impacts and had the opportunity to undertake any necessary research programs. The department took the opportunity to raise the possibility of regulatory changes at a wide range of forums and industry meetings between 2007 and 2012. The department also funded, organised and led ten workshops in capital cities and regional centres that included discussions of the APVMA reviews of dimethoate and fenthion. State-based groups were invited to the workshops held in their respective jurisdiction. The details of these meetings are described in Table 2 below.

[4] The outcomes and actions arising from meetings of these groups are available on request.

[5] Invitees to the DFRCC included the range of stakeholders that are directly involved in the use and application of agriculture chemicals. Chemical production companies were not included in this group but were engaged as part of the broader industry consultation through the workshops (refer to Table 2).

[6] http://domesticquarantine.org.au/issues-and-decisions/apvma-reviews-of-dimethoate-and-fenthion

Table 2: List of dimethoate and fenthion workshops between 2007 and 2012. These workshops focused on updating a wide network of industry and government stakeholders on the progress of the APVMA review and activities being undertaken by governments and industry groups to prepare for potential changes to dimethoate and fenthion use. Although initially the workshops specifically focused on the APVMA reviews, the scope of later workshops was expanded to cover a range of market access issues.

Date	Meeting	Attendees
March 2007	Dimethoate and Fenthion Review Program Open Forum (Canberra)	50 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
May 2007	Dimethoate and Fenthion (Melbourne)	22 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
November 2008	Irradiation Workshop (Brisbane)	22 attendees covering industry and government and researchers
October 2009	Plant Health Australia Industry Forum (Canberra)	PHA industry members
March 2010	Market Access Symposium (Sydney)	64 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
May 2010	Systems Approach Workshop (Sydney)	56 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
April 2011	Label Use Workshop (Brisbane)	37 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
May 2011	Market Access Workshop (Perth)	22 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
May 2011	Market Access Workshop (Mildura)	23 attendees covering industry and government
October 2011	Fruit Fly Symposium (Sydney)	86 attendees covering industry, government and researchers
August 2012	Market Access Workshop (Melbourne)	77 attendees covering industry, government, researchers and consultants

5 FRUIT FLY RELATED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT – HORTICULTURE AUSTRALIA LIMITED

While a proportion of research expertise, capability and funding is directly controlled by state governments, the key body for research and development that horticulture industries can use, influence and direct research opportunities according to their specific industry plans is through HAL and its predecessor the Horticulture Research Development Corporation. HAL is an industry-owned company, established under the *Corporations Act 2001* and funded by statutory levies and export charges, voluntary contributions and Australian Government matching funding for eligible research and development expenditure.

Under this system, projects are considered in line with industry priorities and compete for available funding.

HAL works in partnership with Australia's horticulture industries to invest in research, development and marketing programs that provide benefit to industry and the wider community. HAL invests around $100 million annually in programs designed to align with the strategic investment priorities of Australia's horticulture industries and the Australian Government's Rural Research and Development priorities.

HAL receives recommendations on investment from its Industry Advisory Committees (IACs) which provide industry specific experience and expertise. IAC membership is recommended to HAL by the Peak Industry Body (PIB) of each industry. Each PIB is responsible for ensuring the skills required on an IAC are met by the persons they recommend to be IAC members.

HAL advises that as of November 2013 it (and its predecessor the Horticulture Research Development Corporation) has funded 149 fruit fly related projects valued at approximately $30 million. In relation to dimethoate and fenthion, HAL invested $22.2 million in projects related to the impending removal of these products, including $16.3 million on alternatives. The project funding has targeted both 'In-field' control methods and 'End point' treatments. In-field control research represented 56 per cent of the total investment with the remaining 44 per cent representing End point treatments.

In-field control research for the management and control of fruit fly has included projects related to 'attract and kill' lures and baits, sterile insect techniques, area wide management (AWM) and residue studies to support minor use chemicals or generate additional data to inform APVMA reviews of dimethoate and fenthion.

Reported outcomes stemming from these R&D activities include successful implementation of AWM in the Central Burnett region of North Queensland. The program saw a 95 per cent reduction in peak trap catches between 2003 and 2007, and by 2010, around 1 fly / trap/ day was being caught compared with 240 flies / trap/ day prior to introduction of AWM. The success of AWM resulted in the acceptance of interstate trade of citrus from the region certified under ICA-28 (Interstate Certification Assurance-28).

Other projects have resulted in improved protein bait products being registered for use by the APVMA; improved understanding of high density mass trapping systems and the most cost effective arrangement of traps; the approval of APVMA permits for minor use chemicals, such as clothianidin for fruit fly

control in persimmons, pome and stone fruit; and development of more effective sterile insect emergence and release technologies.

HAL is also part of a consortium with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Biosecurity Flagship, Plant and Food Research Australia, the South Australian Government (Primary Industries and Regions SA) formed to address management of Queensland Fruit Fly. This includes construction of a Queensland Fruit Fly factory, funded by the South Australian Government, with the aim of supporting production of male-only flies for use in the sterile insect technique.

Outside of funding support, the department also assists this process through the identification of potentially important domestic and international threats to current production systems that may warrant targeted research and development. This draws on the department's expertise in market access issues and its close collaboration with state and territory government departments.

6 REFERENCES

AH99002 **-** Advancing the horticulture industries' coordinated response to the National Registration Authority's chemical review program

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992 (amended December 2011)

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994 (amended November 2012)

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Regulations 1995 (amended July 2013)

Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (2013) between the Commonwealth of Australia and all States and Territories available at http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/ag-vet-chemicals/domestic-policy/history-of-coag-reforms/iga-coag

Subcommittee on domestic and quarantine and market access (2010) 'National response plan: responding effectively to changes in approved uses of dimethoate and fenthion', available at http://domesticquarantine.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/dmfile/DFResponsePlanV717December2010.pdf

ATTACHMENT 1

THE REGULATION OF PESTICIDES AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS

The constitutional responsibility for the regulation of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals resides with the state and territories governments. In 1995, the Commonwealth and the state and territory governments signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to establish a National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (NRS).

Under this IGA, the states and the Northern Territory conferred powers to the Commonwealth under their legislation for regulating agvet chemicals up to the point of sale. The states retained responsibility for control of use activities. In 2013, an updated IGA, extending the agreement to include the Australian Capital Territory and to incorporate further policy principles for the harmonisation of agvet chemical regulations, was signed by the Commonwealth and the states and territories.

The IGA identifies the APVMA as the independent statutory authority responsible for registration, approval and reconsideration of products, active constituents and labels, issuing of licences for manufacture of agvet products, permits and ensuring compliance with Commonwealth legislation.

While the APMVA regulates agvet chemicals up to and including the point of retail sale, responsibility for regulating and managing the use of agvet chemicals once they are sold remains with the state and territory governments.

The specific responsibilities of the states and territories for regulating agvet chemicals

The states and territories are directly responsible for regulating the use of agvet chemicals after sale, referred to as control-of-use. These control-of-use regimes rely on the directions for use approved by the APVMA during product registration (i.e. label instructions on how a product may be used), or permits granted by the APVMA.

The jurisdictions are responsible for:

- training requirements for licensing and use of higher risk products
- licensing of professional operators
- monitoring and auditing of licence compliance and chemical residues in produce and the environment
- investigations and resulting enforcement/compliance activities; and education and extension.

The role of the Minister for Agriculture for regulating agvet chemicals

While the APVMA is an independent Australian Government statutory authority, the Minister for Agriculture has some legislative powers to ensure that the APVMA is acting in accordance with any policies determined under agreements between the Australian and state and territory governments.

The APVMA's legislation does not provide a role for the Minister for Agriculture in the decision making process of the APVMA with respect to the registration or review of chemicals.

The Minister's powers to direct the APVMA are set out in Sections 9A and 10 of the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*. Under this legislation, the Minister can only give a direction if satisfied that it is necessary to ensure that the APVMA complies with any policies determined under agreements between the Australian and state and territory governments. However, there is currently no policy under the IGA about agvet chemicals regulation that could allow the Minister to give a direction about the APVMA's specific decisions on fenthion.

The Minister cannot give a direction that would have the effect of requiring the APVMA to act in a manner inconsistent with its obligation to manage the risks of chemical use to human, animal and environmental safety.

Any ministerial direction would be required to be made in accordance with the usual principles of good administrative decision making and would need to accord procedural fairness in appropriate circumstances.

The role of Commonwealth departments for regulating agvet chemicals

Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture's primary role in relation to agvet chemicals regulation is carriage of the overall direction of Australian Government policy for agvet chemicals. The department provides advice to the Minister on the regulation of agvet chemicals and on strategic aspects of chemical management in Australia. The department also implements Government policy by developing amendments to the agvet chemical legislation and working closely with the states and territories as part of the NRS.

The department recently oversaw changes to the APVMA's legislation, in response to concerns about the process and timeframes for APVMA's reviews. From 1 July 2014 there will be changes to the way reviews are conducted. These changes will:

- streamline reviews by tightly setting out the matters to be addressed in the review and by publishing a work plan for the review
- improve transparency and stakeholder involvement by providing opportunities for stakeholder submissions at defined points in the process and by releasing draft review decisions for stakeholder input
- require completion within statutory timeframes and remove barriers to meeting these timeframes
- provide longer data protection periods to encourage stakeholders to supply data to assist reviews.

APVMA

The APVMA is responsible for assessing and registering agvet chemicals for use in Australia. It approves legally binding conditions of use and label instructions and reconsiders the registrations of chemicals. It regulates chemicals up to and including the point of retail sale. Section 14 (3) (e) of the *Agricultural and*

Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994 (the Agvet Code) specifies the responsibilities of the APVMA in granting an approval (relevant extract from the Agvet Code below):

> (e) if the application is for approval of an active constituent or registration of a chemical product—that the use of the constituent or product in accordance with the instructions for its use that the APVMA has approved or approves:
>
> (i) would not be an undue hazard to the safety of people exposed to it during its handling or people using anything containing its residues; and
>
> (ii) would not be likely to have an effect that is harmful to human beings; and
>
> (iii) would not be likely to have an unintended effect that is harmful to animals, plants or things or to the environment; and
>
> (iv) would not unduly prejudice trade or commerce between Australia and places outside Australia

The APVMA is also responsible for reviewing existing chemical products that may present serious risks to human health or the environment. If the APVMA finds significant concerns it is legally bound to take action that reduces risks to an acceptable level. The APVMA's legislation does not require it to consider, assess or develop alternative chemicals or pest control techniques or assess possible financial outcomes of regulatory decisions as part of a review. APVMA seeks expert scientific input from external sources including the Department of Health, who conduct human health risk assessments (public health and occupational health and safety), and the Department of Environment, who conduct environmental risk assessments.

Department of Health

The Department of Health's Office of Chemical Safety sets the health standards for agricultural chemicals. The health standards are based on a standard international approach to risk assessment, using methodology consistent with international best practice. In particular, part of determining these health standards includes the application of a safety factor. The magnitude of the safety factor is selected to account for uncertainties such as the variation between individuals, the completeness of the toxicological database and the nature of the potential adverse effects.

The APVMA use the Department of Health advice on human health standards when assessing the dietary risk of pesticides applied to food crops, like fenthion, to enable it to meet the legislative requirements (including section 14 (3) (e) of the Agvet Code). The APVMA and Food Standards Australia New Zealand establish Maximum Residues Limits (MRL), the highest concentration of a residue of an agvet chemical that should occur in a food following use of a product, to ensure these public health standards are not exceeded. The APVMA approves withholding periods (WHP), the time that must elapse after the last application and the harvesting or consumption of treated plants, to provide users with the information they require to ensure that residues in their treated produce will not exceed the MRL[7].

[7] Residue Guideline No. 10 February 2000: http://www.apvma.gov.au/publications/guidelines/rgl_10.php

Department of Environment

The Department of the Environment's Chemical Assessment Section provides environmental risk assessments and advice to Australian chemical regulators, including the APVMA in relation to agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The APVMA considers the environmental risk assessments and advice when making regulatory decisions about agricultural and veterinary chemicals. The Department of Environment's environmental risk assessments for the APVMA are undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Risk Assessment Guidance Manual for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, which was approved in 2009 by environment Ministers from all states and territories and the Commonwealth.