

PESTICIDES MANAGEMENT IN **SWAZILAND**

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AT THE OECD-FAO-UNEP WORKSHOP ON OBSOLETE PESTICIDES 12-15 SEPTEMBER 2000

General

Most pesticides for use in agriculture are imported privately by agro industries, individuals or retailers. Some are part of a donation package in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (e.g. the Chinese Agricultural Project). The Ministry imports small quantities of pesticides for research purposes and pest control for cattle dipping nationwide.

Because of this there has been no information regarding quantities of pesticides imported into the country. To make things worse there is no legislation specifically dealing with pesticides.

Legislation

As mentioned above, currently Swaziland does not have legislation to regulate and control the use of pesticides in the country. A Bill however was prepared as far back as 1992 with the assistance of FAO consultants. Since then it has been idling in the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. The bill was revived in 1999 and is now being reviewed by the Attorney General's office. The Bill provides, inter alia, for a Director of Pesticides Control, a Registrar of Pesticides and a Pesticides Board. It further contains provisions for the control of manufacture, import, export, sale, use or storage of pesticides, research permits, enforcement, offences and penalties and charges, regulations, indemnities and repeals.

The Regulations 1992 contain provisions for controlling substances; containers and packaging; banned and restricted pesticides. Manufacture. Formulation and repackaging; substances; traders; control of use of pesticides; advertising; and offences, appeals and notices. It is unclear why, seven years after its preparation the Bill has not yet been introduced into Parliament.

Currently, the use of pesticides in agriculture is “regulated and controlled” through persuasion and advice by retailers NGOs and extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture. There is no enforcement by any legal instrument. The Crop Production Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives are the offices responsible.

The bigger estates growing cash crops for export purposes (sugar, banana, citrus, pineapple etc) apply some self-regulation because of stringent requirements regarding pesticide residue limits in importing countries. This affects the choices of active ingredients and spraying regimes, but also most probably adherence to pesticide maximum residue limits.

Pesticide use in the public health sector is regulated under the public Health Act No. 5 of 1969, which contain provisions for the use of pesticides to protect human health.

The importation, distribution and sale of pesticides for use in the home environment is not regulated or controlled. This applies both to pesticides for sale in shops and supermarkets and pesticides for cockroach, rodent and other vermin control by private pest control companies. However, the Pesticides Bill also covers other pesticides than those for use in agriculture, and the new Public Health Bill provides adequate legal authority to regulate and control the use of pesticides in the home. This also applies to the storage, handling and application of pesticides in the home environment by private pest control companies.

Acts that have a relevance to pesticides in Swaziland are the Public Health Act. Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Pesticides Act and the Swaziland Environment Authority Act, with its Pollution Regulations and the Waste Regulations.

Role played by government in the use of pesticides

With the exception of the advice, extension services and training provided by the Crop Production Offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, there is no adequate control over the use of pesticides in agriculture.

With the exception of pesticides used for malaria control and the control of cockroaches, rodents and other vermin by national or local authorities, there is no control over the use of pesticides for public health purposes by private pest control companies.

There is no adequate control over the use of pesticides in the home. Most pesticides are imported from the Republic of South Africa. Approval, packaging and labelling

presumably have been done according to existing South African regulations but this needs confirmation.

Pesticide imports into Swaziland through government tenders, private sector, and donations

There are no pesticide formulation plants in Swaziland. All pesticides imported and sold/used in the country have been imported as ready-to-use formulation. The majority of pesticides coming into the country are imported privately. Some are donations.

Pesticides used for public health purposes are either purchased by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare or are donations by WHO.

Until 1997, the City Council of Mbabane purchased its own pesticides for purposes of insect, rodent and other vermin control operations within the city limits. This activity is now being done by private companies.

Pesticides for use in the home all enter the market through private imports.

Customs procedure for registration of pesticide imports

Most goods imported into Swaziland, are subject to import taxation but pesticides like all imports for agricultural use are exempted. Customs require invoices or similar documents showing the name, address, etc. of the importer together with details of the goods imported. In case permits are needed for certain imports (animals, plants or certain controlled substances) these permits will have to be produced at the border and will normally be issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare or the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives.

The Customs and Excise Department prepare statistics of imported goods according to the international harmonised code of the World Customs Organisation (WCO). Customs department in Swaziland co-operate closely with customs authorities of neighbouring countries, in particular the Republic of South Africa.

Existence of inventory of stocks of obsolete pesticides

In 1998 the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives embarked on an exercise to collect obsolete pesticides throughout the country. This exercise was to ship these stockpiles to either the Republic of South Africa or the United Kingdom for destruction. All holders of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides had been requested to participate. Because Swaziland is not party to the Basel Convention, this exercise was not completed. It ended in the collection, packaging and storage of these pesticides. Presently there are 50 tones of obsolete pesticides properly packaged and stored, the exact identity of most of these is not known. It is believed however that there are more pesticides that still need to be collected from various places and properly stored.

There is need for a project to arrange for the destruction of the collected 50 tones particularly because these are now properly packed and stored. An activity with a wider scope to deal with all the issues related to pesticides is also needed. It is hoped that this aspect will be partly covered by the upcoming Pesticide Act currently under review by the Attorney General's Office. Because of the existing overlaps regarding effects of pesticides on human health, the environment and agriculture, there is need for a national coordinating mechanism, procedure or committee regarding pesticides management in Swaziland.