

California Minor Crops Council Tour

During the week of July 21-24, 2003, Ken Melban, Assistant Manager of the Commission, participated in the California Minor Crops Tour. The tour brought together various individuals from the EPA, CDP, California commodity groups, University of California, Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4) and others involved with agriculture in California. The purpose of the tour was to increase their knowledge regarding integrated pest management techniques along with general farming practices in minor crops for California.

Dr. Lori Berger, Director of the CMCC, organized a packed schedule including over 17 stops and covering 12 commodities (including peppers). Participants traveled on a charter bus, which allowed for presentations to be made en route to the next stop. On Wednesday, July 23rd, Commission Chairman Glen Fischer gave an hour-long presentation, followed by stops in two pepper fields near King City where the tour was joined by Research Committee Chairman Bob Heisey and grower Peter Iverson.

The tour provided the Commission the opportunity to make numerous contacts with regulatory individuals at both the state and federal levels. Many of those who participated in the tour have since contacted the Commission with questions regarding such issues as the

Methyl Bromide Critical Use Exemption, the Rally Section 18 application, and Sulfentrazone. In addition, the IR-4 program has been working closely with the Commission regarding their scheduling of projects relating to crop protection registrations for California peppers.

Methyl Bromide Critical Use Exemption

The Commission has been working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on an application for a critical use exemption (CUE) for methyl bromide (MB). The Parties to the Montreal Protocol, which includes the United States, have agreed to the phasing-out of MB. It is this international conference which will make the final decision on the MB allotments.

The United States has concerns over the inequality in the phase-out requirements between developed and un-developed nations in terms of the proposed MB allowances. EPA and USDA want to make a case for the need for continued use of MB in the United States, and therefore both have become advocates on this issue for the California pepper industry. The Commission is continuing to work with EPA and USDA to further strengthen the Commission's CUE application. There is no indication as to when a final ruling will be made.

Current Pepper Commission Projects

The following is a list of projects funded by the Commission for the Fiscal Year 5/1/03 – 4/30/04:

Researcher	Project Title	Amount
Jim Campbell	●Materials for control of Powdery Mildew	24,880
Mike Coffey	●Strobilurin Fungicide Resistance/Insensitivity in PM	5,000
Molly Jahn	●Improving Phytophthora tolerance in OP Bell varieties for CA ...	26,000
James Prince	●Evaluation of Varieties for Resistance to Phytophthora	c/o funds
Richard Smith	●Preemergence Weed Control Trials	5,056
Judy Thies	●Identification of root-knot nematode species	15,291
Whitefly Action Comm.	●Ventura County WF Action Committee	5,000
Bob Heisey	●Field sampling for nematodes and TSWV	2,000
CPC Chemical Comm.	●Methyl Bromide Efficacy Research	10,000
Jim Moyer & Molly Jahn	●TSWV Isolates and Resistance Determination	10,000
Jim Prince	●Ridomil sensitivity of Phytophthora isolates	5,000
	Total	\$108,227



Published by the California Pepper Commission, 531-D North Alta Ave., Dinuba CA 93618

Special Issue

January, 2004

The Pepper Commission – Meeting the Research and Information Needs of the Industry

by Glen Fischer, Commission Chairman

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chairman of the Pepper Commission since 1998, and as a member or alternate Commissioner since 1992. During this time, I have observed first hand the commitment and dedication Commission members have toward the betterment of the California pepper industry.

As illustrated by the articles in this newsletter, the Commission has been very busy. Our involvement in traditional production research continues strong, with over \$100,000 spent on research in 2003 alone. (2003-04 projects are listed on page 4.)

In addition to the traditional research, a new role for the Commission has developed over the last few years. This role involves gathering the critical information needed by regulatory agencies for the registration of crop protection materials. As all of us in agriculture know first hand, farming in California is becoming more challenging due to regulatory pressures. These pressures come at a time when California agriculture is the most efficient it has ever been in our growing, handling and shipping practices.

This newsletter provides some updates on what the Commission is doing in this important regulatory arena. Such activities of the Commission help our industry to compete. For example, profit margins can be so slim that having the option of applying a herbicide, as opposed to hand weeding an additional time, could mean the difference between making a small profit or losing money.

The Commission is committed to aggressively addressing the research and information needs of the pepper industry. If you have any questions, suggestions or complaints about anything the Commission is doing, please

Growers/Handlers Encouraged to Vote in Upcoming Continuation Referendum

The California Pepper Commission Law requires that there be an industry referendum every five years to determine if growers and handlers of California peppers favor continuation of the program. Such a referendum will be conducted during January 2004. All growers and handlers are encouraged to vote and return their ballot. The vote will be tallied by the California Department of Food Agriculture.

feel free to call the Commission office at (559) 591-3925. You can speak with Jerry Munson, Commission Manager, or Ken Melban, Assistant Manager.

Commission Meets with Chemical Manufacturers

In a series of five meetings on December 4th and 5th a group of Commission members met with representatives from five chemical manufacturers. Those representing the California pepper industry were Glen Fischer, Commission Chairman; Bob Heisey, Research Committee Chairman; Ed Chell, grower; and Dave Veneman, handler.

The meetings, which were arranged by the Commission, were intended to educate both the Commission and the manufacturers regarding subjects such as: manufacturer's interest in the California pepper industry; the pepper industry's needs; opportunities to cooperate between manufacturers and the Commission; and potential new crop protection materials.

The manufacturers included BASF, Bayer, Dow AgroSciences, FMC, and Syngenta. Current lines of products and new chemistries being developed were discussed including the following four areas: fungicides,

herbicides, pesticides and growth regulators. The Commission listed the following pests, not in any particular order, as some of the major concerns to the California pepper industry: pepper weevil, phytophthora, powdery mildew, psyllids, spotted wilt, symphylans, weeds, western flower thrips, and whiteflies.

All those involved agreed the meetings were very beneficial, and agreed to work together to help meet the needs of the California pepper industry. The hope is the manufacturers left the meeting with a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and importance of the California pepper industry.

Possible Control Measures for Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus in Pepper

by Bob Heisey, Research Committee Chairman

The California Pepper Commission is funding a project this year to try to determine the extent of TSWV problems in peppers in California, and to begin to understand the genetic makeup of the virus in California. As part of this project, I have spent time with TSWV experts from throughout the US. Below are some suggestions and observations that might help in control of TSWV in the fields here in California.

✓Pepper plants become more resistant to TSWV, or are more difficult to infect, as they grow older. So it is most important to control the thrips vector when the plants are young.

✓Radicchio is a crop often associated with TSWV infection of tomato and pepper. It is not clear if it is the main source of infection, but since it is often grown as a winter annual, and is a good host of both thrips and TSWV, it could be an important link. My suggestion is to avoid planting early pepper crops close to a radicchio field; spray any fields of radicchio being destroyed with a strong chemical to kill the thrips before working the field; and if possible work the field at night, since the thrips move toward the sun when disturbed.

✓Although imidicloprid does not control thrips, it can be used to lower the incidence of TSWV by up to 50%. Apparently the thrips do not like the taste of imidicloprid in the plant, so they stop feeding and move out of the field. The chemical must be used soon after transplanting for this to be effective.

✓Generally thrips populations are highest in the early spring and again in late summer-fall, so there is usually a spike in TSWV during these seasons. However, in California, weather conditions in some areas are favorable for thrips all season long.

Resistance to TSWV is available in peppers; we hope to know by this spring if this resistance will help control the virus here in California. In the meantime, control of the thrips vectors is the best hope to keep the incidence at a minimum.

Future Uncertain for Rally

As reported in the June newsletter, the Commission was successful in getting a Section 18 on Rally for control of powdery mildew. However, the label was much more restrictive than in previous years, reducing the number of applications from four to two and requiring an application of a strobilurin (Cabrio, Flint, or Quadris) before any application of Rally. Everyone in the industry agrees that these restrictions are detrimental to the growers' ability to combat powdery mildew, but also that two applications with restrictions are better than no applications at all.

When the full strobilurin registrations were issued in 2002, the Commission was left somewhat handicapped in the pursuit of a Rally registration. In the opinion of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR), this prevented the renewing of the Section 18 on Rally because there was now "an effective alternative" registered. Under the provisions for a Section 18, there can be "no effective pesticides available."

During the time that Rally was lost (August 18, 2002 through June 27, 2003), the Commission successfully argued the need for, and ultimately secured the current Section 18 for Rally. The argument was based on the ineffectiveness of the strobilurins and their need for resistance management.

A full registration of Rally is being delayed based on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) review of Triazole, one of the materials found in Rally. EPA has indicated the earliest this review could be completed is the end of 2004. Depending on the final decision, Rally will either receive a full Section 3 registration or will be lost completely.

With the current Section 18 set to expire on May 31, 2004, the Commission decided in November to again pursue a Section 18 on Rally. The Commission is continuing to work on this situation and will keep you informed as developments occur.

Efficacy of Strobilurin Fungicides on Powdery Mildew Questioned

Based on the concerns raised throughout the state regarding the efficacy of the strobilurins (Cabrio, Flint,

Quadris), the Commission decided in October to fund a project with Mike Coffey, UC Riverside, to determine if powdery mildew is resistant to the strobilurin chemistries.

The efficacy of the strobilurin fungicides will be compared in this research investigation. If fungicide resistance is involved, quick identification is important, so that a resistance management program can be implemented. It is hoped that the data obtained can be used to hasten the registration of efficacious materials with other modes of action for inclusion in such resistance management programs.

Dual Magnum Update

In 2001 the Commission, in cooperation with Syngenta, obtained a 24c Special Local Need (SLN) for the use of Dual Magnum (DM) on bell peppers in California for control of weeds. The label was limited to "bells" only because, at the time, Syngenta only had residue data and a tolerance established for bells. The Commission decided to proceed with the registration, limited to bells, with the hope that it would be amended to include all varieties.

Since June 2003, the Commission has been working with Syngenta and the CDPR to expand the current label to include chiles. Under the current label, Syngenta requires that any grower who uses DM return an indemnification agreement, releasing Syngenta from any liability from crop damage. During the current process of amending the label, CDPR is raising concerns over the indemnification agreement element of the DM registration. This reversal in policy by CDPR places the DM registration in jeopardy.

Syngenta has indicated they will not allow a label without the condition of an indemnification agreement. Further, CDPR has stated they most likely will not allow the registration to continue under the same labeling requirement, that being the indemnification agreement.

As for now, DM is still registered in California for bell peppers, as long as each individual grower returns the indemnification agreement. The Commission is in the process of dealing with all parties involved in an attempt to resolve this situation in a manner which will allow for the continuing use of DM on peppers in California.

Commission Pursues Registration on the Herbicide Sulfentrazone

With the cost of farming in California continuing to increase, due in part to the escalating labor costs and additional regulations faced by growers, the Commission has made every effort possible to pursue additional herbicide registrations on peppers for California.

Sulfentrazone, an FMC compound, has looked very effective in trials conducted by Richard Smith, Monterey County Farm Advisor. The Commission has recently been engaged in talks with FMC regarding the registration of sulfentrazone on peppers in California. FMC's reluctance to register sulfentrazone in California hinges on CDPR's requirement of a Soil Dissipation Study to be done in California. According to FMC, two of these studies have already been done outside of California, and a federal registration will be forthcoming, probably by the end of 2004. The cost for this additional study to be done in California is from \$200-\$250,000.

The Commission is closely working with FMC and CDPR to resolve this situation in the hope of obtaining a sulfentrazone registration on peppers in California.

Pest Management Strategic Plan for California Peppers

The California Minor Crops Council (CMCC), of which the Pepper Commission has been a member since 2001, is working with the Commission at producing a Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP). A PMSP is a publication that can be used by CDPR, EPA, chemical manufacturers, etc., as a resource when questions involving California pepper production arise. These plans are instrumental in helping commodities evaluate current regulatory, research, and educational issues relative to transitioning towards reduced risk integrated pest management. A final plan is expected sometime in 2004.

Diazinon Re-registered

In July of 2002, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) issued an Interim Re-registration Document (IRED) for all diazinon products. As part of the agreement with USEPA, registrants cancelled *all granular registrations*, a number of minor crop uses, and *deleted all foliar application* uses on vegetable crops. The EPA did conclude that peppers (bell and chile), could suffer crop losses from soil pests if diazinon was not maintained for soil application.

The Commission has been working with Makhteshim Agan of North America (MANA) on a state section 24(c) (SLN) registration for the use of Diazinon AG 500 insecticide on peppers for control of garden symphylans.

The need for the registration on diazinon became more apparent by the EPA's cancellation of the dyfonate registration. The liquid diazinon 24c (SLN) registration was just approved at the end of 2003.