

News Release: CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION ACTS TO ELIMINATE MAJOR USES OF THE PESTICIDE DURSBAN TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND PUBLIC HEALTH

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
June 8, 2000

To protect the health and environment of all Americans, especially children, the Clinton-Gore Administration today announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the manufacturer of Dursban have agreed to eliminate the widely used pesticide for nearly all household purposes. Dursban, also known as chlorpyrifos, is the most widely used household pesticide product in the United States. Today's action will also significantly reduce residues of chlorpyrifos on several foods regularly eaten by children.

"Today's action is a major step in the Clinton-Gore Administration's on-going efforts to better protect public health, especially the health of children," said EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner. "Chlorpyrifos is part of a class of older, riskier pesticides, some going back 50 years. Exposure to these kinds of pesticides can cause neurological effects. Now that we have completed the most extensive scientific evaluation ever conducted on the potential health hazards from a pesticide, it is clear the time has come to take action to protect our children from exposure to this chemical."

Chlorpyrifos is an ingredient used for a broad range of lawn and home insecticide products, for agricultural purposes and for termite treatment.

The agreement announced today will:

- Stop production of and phase-out all home, lawn, and garden uses;
- Stop production of and phase-out the vast majority of termite-control uses;
- Significantly lower allowable pesticide residues on several foods regularly eaten by children.

EPA is taking this action under the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), which was passed unanimously by Congress under the leadership of the Clinton Administration and signed by the President in 1996. The FQPA requires a systematic review of all pesticides to ensure they meet the tough new safety standards that, for the first time, must be protective of children, who are among the most vulnerable to adverse health effects from pesticide residues.

Last August, the Clinton-Gore Administration announced action against methyl parathion and azinphos methyl to protect children from pesticide residues in food. Today's action is the next step in realizing the protections for families and communities under the Food Quality Protection Act.

Specifically, today's agreement will halt manufacture of chlorpyrifos by December 2000 for nearly all residential uses. It will require that virtually all of those residential uses be deleted from existing product labels prior to that time, including uses for home and garden sprays, uses to control termites in completed houses and uses on lawns.

This agreement also mandates that all uses will be phased out this year in areas where children could be exposed, including schools, daycare centers, parks, recreation areas, hospitals, nursing homes, stores and malls.

By the end of 2001, uses to control termites in buildings other than homes or areas where children could be exposed will be phased-out as well. By the end of 2004, the termiticide use on new construction will also be phased-out unless new information becomes available which show that this use could safely continue.

Today's action also calls for canceling or significantly lowering allowable residues for several foods regularly eaten by children, such as tomatoes, apples and grapes. These actions will be taken by the beginning of the next growing season.

Chlorpyrifos belongs to a family of pesticides called organophosphates which can affect the nervous system. The effects from chlorpyrifos exposure vary depending on the dose, but symptoms of over-exposure can include nausea, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea and general weakness. Because of their smaller body weights, children are more susceptible to these effects. Children can be exposed to chlorpyrifos through food residues, by playing in areas where chlorpyrifos has been used as a home-and-garden insecticide, or from inhalation of vapors when chlorpyrifos is used to control termites

Chlorpyrifos, also known as Dursban, Lorsban and other trade names, is one of the most widely used organophosphate insecticides in the United States, with more than 20 million pounds applied annually. Approximately 50 percent is used around homes, gardens, and lawns to control a variety of insects, including termites. The remaining 50 percent is used on 40 different agricultural crops. DowAgroSciences of Indianapolis is the primary registrant. There are approximately 825 registered products.

EPA advises consumers that short-term use of these products according to label instructions does not pose an imminent risk. If consumers choose to discontinue use immediately, they should contact their state or local hazardous material disposal program for information on proper disposal. Additional information about chlorpyrifos and today's action can be found on the EPA web site at: www.epa.gov/pesticides.