CRI Cutting Edge

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Consumer Assurance Update

Key South Korean MRL changes

The November edition of the *Recommended Restrictions for Plant Protection Products on Southern African Export Citrus* is now available on the CGA website.

EU Chlorpyrifos Situation

Following the earlier communication about the developing situation on Chlorpyrifos in the EU (Cutting Edge 187) where the Chlorpyrifos MRL is under review and could be reduced to a much lower level during 2015, CGA can only report that the Standing Committee on Pesticide Residue discussed the matter again in September 2014 but did not reach a conclusion. They proposed to discuss the matter again in November 2014. Growers should be aware that the CGA/CRI will not change the Recommended Usage Restrictions until the official European Chlorpyrifos MRL is officially amended but are alerting growers to the possibility of the EU MRL changing. Any revised level would probably take at least six months to come into effect, but this could potentially have some overlap with the 2015 export of the current crop.

Guazatine EU MRL Update

CGA and ICA chemicals continue to pursue the retention of the existing EU MRL for Guazatine (or similar level). Support from Minister Davies (the DTI) and Deputy-minister Cele (DAFF) helped to postpone a vote to automatically reduce the MRL in September 2014. In light of an EFSA report that was not favourable towards maintaining the existing MRLs, more effort is needed to provide justification for its continued use. The basis for requesting the MRL to be kept in place is the key role Guazatine plays in Sour rot control. Sour rot can result in significant waste in some years, there are few effective alternatives to Guazatine, and the EFSA report itself does not highlight any specific consumer health risks associated with its use. Ongoing technical discussions will hopefully yield a positive outcome and mean that the MRL is retained.

Key South Korean MRL changes

Two important MRL changes have occurred that will have an impact on South Korean trade in 2015:

1) The 2,4-D MRL has been reduced from effectively 2.0 mg/kg for all citrus to 0.05 mg/kg for oranges, 0.15 mg/kg for Grapefruit and 1.0 mg/kg for lemons. There are insufficient data to support the view that current uses of 2,4-D as a post-harvest treatment on oranges and grapefruit will result in residues below the new MRL, and the appropriate action at this stage is to avoid the use of 2,4-D on oranges and grapefruit. It seems unlikely that there will be any impact for lemons (although the quantity of lemons exported to South Korea is negligible). CGA are engaging with the Koreans on this and have been in discussions with USA suppliers to Korea in order to cooperate to have the levels increased.
2) Although no official notice has been received, CGA is following up on at least two separate reports that South Korea will require heavy metal (specifically cadmium) residue tests prior to shipment to South Korea in 2015. CGA must still determine the precise details of the requirement, but these general measures have been introduced due to recent cases of high cadmium levels in Banana imports into South Korea. Exporters to South Korea should note these developments and continue to engage with their receiver in South Korea to ensure compliance.

Chlorates in EU

The detection of Chlorates on a range of foods in the EU in 2012 caused the EU to initiate a process to review the general level of chlorate residues in food, with the view to introduce appropriate tolerance levels at the EU level for regulatory and consumer assurance purposes. This process is EU-wide and ongoing but only likely to be finalized in June 2015 when an official vote is taken. EFSA will provide a reasoned opinion to guide this decision-making process. In the meantime, and to be pragmatic, the individual EU member states will be enforcing national tolerance levels applicable to imported citrus and other foods. CGA has the SHAFFE summary on what these levels are, but basically 0.1 mg/kg appears to be the most common level. As suggested in Cutting Edge 182 producers should have drawn samples in 2014 to compare existing residue levels in their fruit against this level to determine the risks they face of an exceedance in any of the EU member states.

Perchlorate in the EU

The EU is also evaluating the situation of perchlorate residues detected in food with a value of 0.2 mg/kg agreed for intra-EU trade until the release of the EFSA opinion. EFSA has now released the reasoned opinion. On 323 citrus samples in the EU the average perchlorate level was 5.7 µg/kg, which suggests that if the 0.2 mg/kg tolerance is accepted then there is unlikely to be any concern. Use of natural fertilizers, irrigation water contaminated with perchlorates, chlorinated substances used for packhouse

disinfection, along with natural and anthropogenic sources in the environment can all be sources of contamination. The Standing Committee on Pesticide Residue must now decide what to do with this EFSA information. CGA will advise growers of the decision but gathering residue data on specific perchlorate residue levels on fruit arriving in the EU would be advisable.

DDAC and BAC in the EU

The decision has been made around the default level applicable to DDAC and BAC residues on food, setting the level at 0.1 mg/kg. Previously a tolerance had been applied of 0.5 mg/kg for cross contamination arising from sanitizer use. It is hoped that the application to have the citrus DDAC MRL increased will be processed in due course which will permit the use of products containing this active again.

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