

THE FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT: AN UPDATE, AND WHAT IT MAY MEAN TO THE FUTURE OF CRANBERRY INSECT CONTROL

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FQPA Update. The impacts of the federal Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA) are still being sorted out. New decisions are being made, and new procedures are being implemented regularly. The following were developments during 1998.

- The review of all high-priority products (including organophosphate and carbamate insecticides) is to be completed by 2002.
- Decisions will likely be made product by product as the various reviews progress.
- Crops that pose the biggest risk, based upon issues such as total quantity consumed, pesticide usage patterns, and childhood exposure, will be dealt with first.
- Decisions on “negligible-risk” crops, which are those that do not fit into the above categories, are likely to be delayed. Cranberry is in this category.
- Decisions for continued registration of products on negligible-risk crops will likely be made by the product registrants (pesticide companies), based upon risk-cup issues; ultimately, this relates back to product profitability.
- Registrants continue to meet with EPA and with commodity groups.
- Representatives of the cranberry industry have been very active in arguing the industry’s case with both EPA and the registrants.
- There is still a large amount of uncertainty about the ultimate outcome; but there may be more cause for optimism than a year ago.

Life after FQPA It's a bit hard to predict what insect management will be like once FQPA becomes fully enacted, because we don't have a clear picture as to the final decisions that will be made. However, even in the worst-case scenario of the elimination of all organophosphate and carbamate insecticides (which, in my opinion, is unlikely to happen), there will still be tools in the pest management tool box.

- Pest scouting will become increasingly important. As we lose broad-spectrum pesticides, we will likely be using more selective materials. This will mean that growers will need to know precisely what pests are causing economic injury so that the best management methods can be used. The cranberry industry has adopted IPM-based pest monitoring programs better than most other agricultural commodities, and is in a good position to use this experience as scouting becomes even more important.
- The cranberry industry has long used "cultural controls" such as sanding and flooding for pest control. These methods may even increase in importance in the future. I think more research needs to be done on the use of short-term, strategically-targeted floods for controlling problems such as girdler and tipworm. However, in conjunction with this, we need to conduct research on how to use such floods so that they do not harm the crop or the vines.
- Biological controls may play an increasingly important role. Research continues in perfecting commercially-available beneficial organisms such as insect-parasitic nematodes for cranberry girdler. A new species of *Trichogramma* wasp, an egg parasite of blackheaded fireworm, is being evaluated in the Pacific Northwest and the results are promising. New strains of *Bacillus thuringiensis* are being developed that may be more effective against our hard-to-control pests such as fireworm.
- Pheromone-mediated mating disruption appears very possible with both blackheaded fireworm and sparganothis fruitworm. Field trials will be expanding in 1999, and commercial products will be on the market. Further research is needed to know exactly how to use these materials in combination with other control practices.
- Some currently-available insecticides will continue to be useful. We may lose some registrations of organophosphates and carbamates, but I believe there will continue to be opportunities for use of at least some of our currently-registered materials. In addition, pyrethroids and Bt's will continue to be available.
- Finally, new insecticides with totally "new chemistry" are becoming available for use in cranberry, some likely as early as 1999. These products tend to be more selective in their activity and have less impact on non-target organisms; that is, they tend to be safer to pesticide handlers and applicators, and more benign to the general environment. Also, they are less harmful to our beneficial organisms; some may even be available for use during bloom when bees are pollinating. Beneficial natural enemies of our pests will more likely be

conserved, therefore providing even better natural control. For their target pests, these new products are equally as effective as our traditional materials.

In conclusion, because the cranberry industry has been proactive in the acceptance of IPM practices, and in the support of research on new pest management methods, we should be able to survive FQPA quite well. We may all have to learn some new techniques, but that shouldn't be difficult with the pest management infrastructure already in place. Finally, because many of the newer practices will be more selective and easier on beneficials, in some ways we may actually end up better off than before.