



**Australian Pesticides &
Veterinary Medicines Authority**

BACKGROUND

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APVMA Diazinon and Sheep Ectoparasiticides Reviews

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the Australian government independent authority charged with the protection of the health and safety of people, animals, the environment and trade through science-based regulation of pesticides and veterinary medicines.

The APVMA is conducting reviews of currently approved chemical products that are important to the Australian wool industry.

The APVMA is conducting a review of products containing diazinon in response to concerns about its potential adverse impacts on public health, the environment and trade.

Diazinon is a broad-spectrum organophosphorus insecticide and an important sheep ectoparasiticide (a chemical used to control and treat external parasites such as lice and blowfly strike). Products containing diazinon have been approved for use in Australia for over 30 years.

The APVMA is also conducting a review of sheep ectoparasiticides because of concerns that chemical residues on treated wool might pose a health risk to people handling the wool. There were also concerns that residues might lead to adverse environmental impacts when effluent from wool scouring is released into the environment and that this might have the potential to prejudice trade in countries which are sensitive to the release of chemical residues.

There are 60 registered sheep ectoparasiticide products containing 12 active constituents that are involved in this review. Diazinon is also a sheep ectoparasiticide.

Diazinon

One of the key issues that emerged in the course of the diazinon review was that of occupational health and safety. The limited data that were available suggested that workers exposed to diazinon may face unacceptable health risks. A recent evaluation of a research project requested by the APVMA, funded by Australian Wool Innovation and evaluated by the Office of Chemical Safety (within the Department of Health and Ageing) supported these concerns. It found that in certain use situations, diazinon can splash onto rural workers in the process of treating sheep and be absorbed through the skin and may result in an unacceptable occupational health and safety (OH&S) risk.

Faced with this information, the APVMA as the national regulator faces three options:

- Discontinue the use of diazinon on sheep by any method of application
- Restrict the use of diazinon on sheep through changes to product labels
- Change the product labels to increase the amount of protective equipment that must be worn by workers.

Sheep Ectoparasiticides Review

The APVMA sought expert advice from the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) and the Office of Chemical Safety (OCS) in conducting this review. DEH advised that when sheep ectoparasiticide residues on wool are removed during the scouring process, the resultant discharge of liquid effluent potentially poses a risk to aquatic environments. DEH advice is that the degree of risk from the discharge of the chemicals under review varied but that in a number of cases, the risk to the Australian environment may be unacceptable.

DEH also considered the risks in the overseas environment. Here it was determined that some of the active constituents posed a risk due to a range of environmental and regulatory factors. For example, under a new regulatory regime on environmental effluents scheduled at this stage to be given effect in October 2007 in the European Union, seven of the active constituents would pose a potentially unacceptable risk.

Expert advice received from the OCS indicates that there may also be an unacceptable OH&S risk to workers such as shearers, wool classers and other farm workers who apply product or handle treated wool, for some of the active constituents.

Considering these issues, potential APVMA options are to:

- Require that a rehandling period statement be added to the label of all sheep ectoparasiticide products
- Alert users of sheep ectoparasiticide products that use of the product may produce residues that may not comply with the proposed EU standards

The development of an effective mechanism to reduce these potential risks, such as a wool residue advice scheme (WRAS) or an enhanced vendor declaration scheme, would be very welcome.

Today's Workshop

The APVMA conducted a workshop on the review of sheep ectoparasiticide products and the review of diazinon today, 8 December, 2005.

Participants included representatives from state regulatory authorities, chemical manufacturers, AVCARE, scientists from Australian government and State agencies, National Farmers Federation (including WoolProducers), NSW Farmers Association, Australian Wool Innovations and the Contract Dipping Association.

The objective of the workshop was to seek feedback from participants on the proposed direction of the two related reviews - diazinon and sheep ectoparasiticide products.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- discuss the findings of the diazinon worker exposure study
- examine whether any existing sheep uses for diazinon can be retained
- consider the impact of the regulatory outcomes of the diazinon review on the review of sheep ectoparasiticides
- consider the potential findings of the sheep ectoparasiticides review
- discuss possible future consequences associated with the review of diazinon and sheep ectoparasiticides.

With the support of participants, the workshop sought to determine how to best mitigate the risks associated with the use of sheep ectoparasiticides and diazinon.

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