

CONTRADICTIONS

Surround the Future Use of

MSMA IN TURF

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Rumors have swirled in the past months regarding the future use of MSMA and the decision by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to restrict and eventually phase out use by 2012. Initial reports provided by the MAA Task Force (<http://www.maatf.com>) indicated that new scientific evidence would be evaluated up to 2012, and it was probable that further use of MSMA would return after 2012. Specifically, the MAA Task Force released the following announcement that summarized the agreement reached between it and the EPA in January 2009:

"During 2012 (before the discontinuation of these uses), EPA, through one of the Agency's external peer-review groups, will evaluate the scientific information available on any risk posed by inorganic arsenic. The use of MSMA will continue beyond 2013 should the review result in a conclusion that there is no health concern at the doses of exposure resulting from the relevant uses. EPA will also take into account additional information available on the benefits conferred by MSMA."

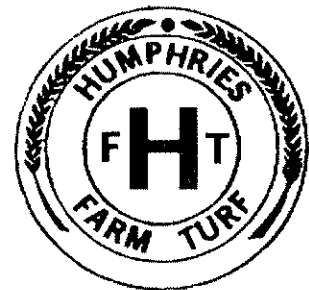
Further, "The Task Force strongly believes that there is growing scientific evidence that low doses of inorganic arsenic do not pose a concern to human health or to the environment. If an EPA science review, to convene in 2012, concurs with this position, then inorganic arsenic resulting from uses of MSMA will not pose a concern, and the Task Force will petition for restoration of some or all of MSMA uses." (Source:<http://www.maatf.com>)

This announcement was published in *Alabama Turf Times*, as well as by numerous other turfgrass organizations across the country.

Information provided by the Task Force and the EPA, however, are contradictory. New information provided recently on the EPA website indicates that there is no possibility of continued sale and use of organic arsenicals on turfgrass after 2012 (except for use of remaining stock through 2013). As clearly stated, new information will be evaluated; however, "in light of new information, this agreement allows for the reregistration of MSMA use on cotton only..." (http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/organic_arsenicals_fs.html)

Further information provided in the Organic Arsenical Reregistration Eligibility Decision (RED), amended April 22, 2009, also indicates that MSMA will potentially be sold for use on cotton after 2012, with no potential use in turf after remaining stocks are depleted in 2013. (Source: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/organic_arsenicals_fs.html, click "Red Amendment - April 2009" link)

So who is right - the MAA Task Force or the EPA? Right now, it is difficult to say. The MAA Task Force is very optimistic regarding the potential use of MSMA. They have stated from the beginning that there is ample scientific evidence that organic arsenic contained within MSMA herbicides is drastically different from the inorganic arsenic we have all come to fear. Regardless of such evidence, the EPA seems to be trying to slam the door shut on potential turfgrass uses. I am starting to get the feeling that this issue will not be fully resolved until the 2012 deadline. ♦



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