

Agrichemicals

Food Quality Protection Act — Children and Consumers



Ag Center

Helping Agriculture Comply with
Environmental Requirements

F O C U S O N

Children and Consumers

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996 amended the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

These amendments fundamentally changed the way EPA regulates pesticides. FQPA :

- mandates a single, health-based standard for all pesticides in all foods
- provides special protections for infants and children
- expedites approval of safer pesticides
- creates incentives for the development and maintenance of effective crop protection tools for American farmers
- requires periodic re-evaluation of pesticide registrations and tolerances to ensure that the scientific data supporting pesticide registrations will remain up to date in the future.

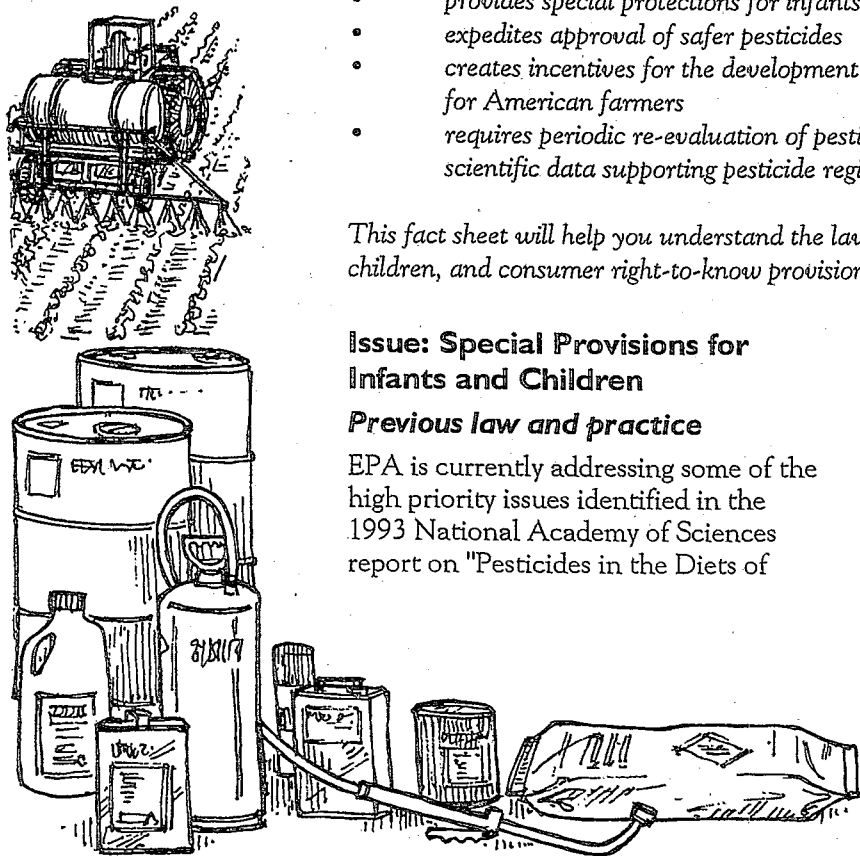
This fact sheet will help you understand the law regarding special provisions for infants and children, and consumer right-to-know provisions.

Issue: Special Provisions for Infants and Children

Previous law and practice

EPA is currently addressing some of the high priority issues identified in the 1993 National Academy of Sciences report on "Pesticides in the Diets of

Infants and Children." The Agency routinely assesses risks by age group, ethnicity, and region when setting tolerances. There was no explicit mandate to do so under previous law, and the data available to EPA have been criticized as outdated and inadequate.





EPA uses available, reliable data when considering the need to retain, modify, or remove the 10-fold additional safety factor.

FQPA

FQPA explicitly requires EPA to address risks to infants and children before a tolerance can be established. The law also provides for an additional safety factor to ensure that tolerances are safe for infants and children.

What does this mean?

In keeping with FQPA, each tolerance decision issued after August 3, 1996, contains a specific finding that the tolerance levels are appropriately protective of children. FQPA requires EPA to apply an additional safety factor of 10 during its risk assessment to account for the potential for pre- and post-natal toxicity, as well as for the completeness of the toxicology and exposure database, unless the Agency determines that another factor is adequately protective.

Recognizing the importance of the 10-fold safety factor, EPA began developing policy and implementation procedures soon after passage of FQPA to ensure consistent and defensible decisions. Within 3 months, EPA sought advice regarding the Agency's approach to this issue. In January 1997, EPA issued guidance that describes generally the types of information needed to determine whether infants and children are especially sensitive to a chemical and whether an additional safety factor is needed for their protection.

More recently, an EPA task force has considered policy issues related to the FQPA safety factor, and EPA submitted a revised draft policy and operational practices for making decisions on the safety factor for scientific peer review in May 1999. These documents were released in July 1999 for public review and comment.

EPA has also updated pesticide toxicity testing guidelines to enable the Agency to better assess risks to infants and children. In July 1998, EPA published updated guidelines for animal studies on prenatal development and reproduction, and new guidelines on effects to the immune system for use by registrants in conducting such studies. These new guidelines incorporate recommendations from external scientific peer review.

EPA has initiated a "National Agenda to Protect Children's Health from Environmental Threats." EPA is implementing several pesticide-related recommendations published by the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee:

- Reevaluate the atrazine pesticide tolerances
- Reevaluate pesticide tolerances for methyl parathion, dimethoate, and chlorpyrifos
- Reevaluate the Worker Protection Standard.

While EPA had general information materials that describe how to reduce pesticide exposure, developing materials to reach consumers at the supermarket level was a new departure.

The Ag Center welcomes comments on this document and its other services.

Issue: Consumer "Right to Know" Provisions

Previous law and practice

There is no comparable law or practice at the Federal level.

FQPA

The law required EPA to publish a short pamphlet containing consumer-friendly information on the risks and benefits of pesticides. It includes any tolerances that EPA has established based on benefits considerations, and recommendations for reducing exposure to pesticide residues and maintaining a healthy diet.

In addition, petitions for tolerances must include informative summaries that can be published and made publicly available. The law also recognizes a State's right to require warnings or labeling of food that has been treated with pesticides.

What does this mean?

EPA coordinated with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to accomplish this.

With advice from the Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee and consumers, and consultation with USDA and FDA, EPA developed a brochure, *Pesticides and Food*, to inform consumers about pesticide use on food, government programs that protect them from pesticide risks, and ways they can reduce their exposure to pesticides. The brochure also explains how the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) increases protection of infants and children from exposure to pesticides.

The pamphlet is available at www.epa.gov/pesticides/food/. This information has been distributed as required by FQPA to large retail grocers for public display.

EPA has distributed more than 4 million copies -- to 30,000 grocery stores, and to public health officials, libraries, and the medical community. EPA also designed a companion *Pesticides and Food* web site, which is referenced in the printed brochure and gives consumers more detailed information.

(www.epa.gov/pesticides/food)

For more information

You can get online information about FQPA at <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa> and about food safety at <http://www.epa.gov/oeca/ag/tfsy.html>.

For more facts about compliance, call the Ag Center's toll-free number, 1-888-663-2155. Materials can be sent to you by fax or by mail, or you can talk to an Ag Center representative. For a list of all publications available from the Ag Center, request document number 10001, "Ag Center Publications."

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