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EPA Takes Action to Investigate PFAS Contamination

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WASHINGTON (January 14, 2021) — As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) extensive efforts to address PFAS, today the agency is making new information available about EPA testing that shows PFAS contamination from fluorinated containers.

Through a coordinated effort with both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a pesticide manufacturer, the agency has determined that fluorinated high-density polyethylene (HDPE) containers that are used to store and transport a mosquito control pesticide product contain PFAS compounds that are leaching into the pesticide product.

While the agency is early in its investigation and assessment of potential impacts on health or the environment, the affected pesticide manufacturer has voluntarily stopped shipment of any products in fluorinated HDPE containers and is conducting its own testing to confirm EPA results and product stability in un-fluorinated containers. In addition, EPA has issued a request for information under the Toxics Substance Control Act (TSCA) to the company that fluorinates the containers used by certain pesticide manufacturers. The TSCA subpoena requests information about the fluorination process used to treat the containers.

As EPA evaluates this issue, the agency asks that pesticide and other companies using fluorinated containers, and entities that provide container fluorination services, engage in good product stewardship and examine their distribution chains to identify potential sources of contamination. EPA will also continue to work closely with the entities involved and their supply and distribution chains, mosquito control districts, the pesticide and packaging industry, federal partners, states, and tribes that may be affected to provide information and guidance on next steps. EPA understands the need to

provide guidance to states, tribes, and other users as they prepare to purchase mosquito control products for 2021 and will provide more information as it continues its investigation.

EPA will update the following webpage with information as it becomes available: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pfas-packaging>

Background

Since first becoming aware of the PFAS contamination issue in early September 2020 through citizen science testing of a pesticide product for mosquito control, EPA has been working to investigate the source of the contamination. Throughout October and November 2020, EPA has worked diligently in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to request samples of the pesticide product and analyze the identified product at different steps of production and manufacturing to determine whether PFAS are present, including issuing an information request to the pesticide registrant on October 5, 2020 seeking information on the affected pesticide's production, sales, and distribution.

In late December 2020, EPA studied the fluorinated HDPE containers used to store and transport the product and determined the containers are a possible source of PFAS contamination. EPA has been in close contact with Massachusetts, the pesticide registrant and the fluorinated HDPE container treatment company to discuss the issue, as well as to obtain the materials needed to test for PFAS in the product and the fluorinated HDPE containers.

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), EPA is charged with approving active and inert ingredients in the registered pesticide products sold in the United States. EPA has confirmed that PFAS is not a known ingredient or additive in the company's affected product and is collaboratively working with the registrant as EPA laboratories test samples of the product at different steps of production and manufacturing, in addition to the agency's study of the containers themselves.

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Additional Q&As for ECOS and NASDA

Who is Clarke Mosquito? What kind of products do they design and manufacture?

Clarke Mosquito Control Products, Inc. is a global public health products and services company, located in St. Charles, Illinois serving both public and private consumers. Along with developing and manufacturing Anvil 10+10 ULV (EPA Reg. No. 1021-1688-8329), Clarke offers a broad selection of adulticides and larvicides for use in public health mosquito control. Clarke is providing a dedicated hotline for questions: 1-630-671-3100.

What is Anvil 10+10 ULV?

Anvil 10+10 ULV (EPA Reg. No. 1021-1688-8329) is a pesticide product manufactured by Clarke Mosquito. It is used for mosquito control to protect public health by reducing transmission of mosquito-borne diseases like Zika, West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a rare but deadly disease carried by mosquitos. The Anvil product is a supplemental distribution (“distributor product”) of EPA Reg. No. 1021-1688 (Multicide Mosquito Adulticiding Concentrate 2705, McLaughlin Gormley King Company D/B/A MGK).

Where is Anvil 10+10 ULV used?

According to Clarke, the states that purchased Anvil 10+10 ULV between 2018 and 2020 are the following:

Alabama
Arkansas
California
Delaware
Florida
Illinois
Indiana
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Maine
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
North Carolina
Nebraska
New Hampshire
Nevada
New York
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Texas
Virginia
Washington

Who is Inhance Technologies?

Inhance Technologies is a container treatment company based in Texas. They offer a wide range of surface technologies and barrier packaging, including the fluorination of HDPE containers. Inhance has reported to EPA locations in Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.

How common is the use of fluorinated containers for storage of pesticides and other products?

It is estimated that roughly 20-30% of all rigid agriculture chemical packaging in North America sold into the crop protection market are packaged in fluorinated HDPE containers.

Does EPA have a comprehensive list of pesticides stored in these fluorinated containers?

Fluorinated HDPE containers are widely used as chemical-resistant containers for laboratory and industrial chemicals storage. Although registrants are required to provide details regarding the type of container in which their pesticide product is distributed commercially, this is the first time that EPA has been aware of fluorinated HDPE container use as a potential source of PFAS contamination in a pesticide. EPA is using its authorities under FIFRA and TSCA to work with other federal agencies, the pesticide industry, states and localities to gather more information about the potential scope of this contamination and to evaluate whether other regulated products may be affected.

What are EPA's regulations on the type of containers that may be used for pesticide storage?

EPA established requirements for containers used to sell or distribute pesticides to ensure that containers are strong, to minimize human exposure to pesticides while handling containers and to facilitate the disposal and recycling of pesticide containers. The specific requirements vary according to the type of container. Portable refillable containers must meet certain Department of Transportation (DOT) design, construction and marking requirements; be marked with a serial number or other identifying code; and have a one-way valve and/or a tamper-evident device on all openings. Nonrefillable containers must meet certain DOT design, construction and marking requirements; have standard closures; allow the contents to pour in a continuous stream and meet a cleanability standard. For more information about EPA's pesticide container regulations, see EPA's Pesticide Container web page.