

Biorational Pesticides

Overview

The terms “biorational pesticide” and “biopesticide” are used to describe pesticides of natural origin that have limited or no adverse effects on the environment or beneficial organisms. They are considered third-generation pesticides that are environmentally sound and closely resemble or are identical to chemicals produced by insects and plants. EPA uses the term “biopesticides” rather than “biorationals” and strongly encourages use of these products, which require less data to be registered than conventional pesticides and often take less than a year to be registered. Although certain sectors of the conventional pesticide industry believe many of these products are not yet ready for mainstream production, small “mom & pop” establishments are selling them directly to producers or retailers with label claims that may not be valid. The adjuvant market was similarly situated about 20 years ago when they were viewed as “snake oil” products, were not regulated or registered, and not subject to uniform industry standards. Nevertheless, industry pulled adjuvants well beyond that market perception and is now working to ensure adjuvant quality and efficacy through the CPDA adjuvant certification program. As the lack of distinction between “biopesticides” and “biorationals” illustrates, there is the same need for consensus definitions and product standards for these products as there was for adjuvants. Consequently, several CPDA members have inquired about CPDA’s facilitating development of product standards through ASTM International (ASTM) and, possibly, green certification. In response, CPDA staff discussed this issue with the CPDA Board of Directors in March 2010, and the Board authorized the formation of a working group to initiate and coordinate efforts to obtain ASTM consensus definitions and product standards.

Update

An initial group of interested members has participated in two conference calls to discuss how to proceed with this initiative. The group has also developed a list of initial tasks that must be undertaken to achieve the ASTM standards and to integrate EPA into the effort. The initial goal is to initiate the ASTM standards development process at the October 2010 ASTM meeting in San Antonio, TX.