

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 26 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000145

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: International Test Results for Carbendazim

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon Nick

Question:

In Brazil, carbendazim is registered at the Brazilian Department of Agriculture for spraying in crops including citrus. In the beginning of 2012 the use of the product for controlling early black spot was suspended. Brazil's orange juice industry also removed carbendazim from its list of recommended fungicides for producers, after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration blocked the entry of several shipments of juice that tested positive for it.

- a) Is FSANZ aware the Brazilian public prosecutor's office recently filed a legal suit in court to suspend the registrations of carbendazim-based fungicide products in Brazil?
- b) Does FSANZ take international action into account when considering the banning of fungicides such as carbendazim?

Answer:

- a) No. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has not been made aware of this report as the registration and use of agricultural products is not within FSANZ's remit. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is responsible for the domestic registration and use of agricultural chemicals.
- b) FSANZ considers a range of factors when setting maximum residue limits (MRLs), primarily health and safety impacts and potential trade impacts. FSANZ considers changes to MRLs in the Food Standards Code to harmonise with international MRLs established by the Codex Alimentarius or by a regulatory authority in a recognised jurisdiction. In doing this, FSANZ considers whether residues are expected to occur in a food as a result of the use of chemical products in the source country or countries, and requires evidence that the food is imported into Australia. FSANZ then conducts dietary exposure assessments to determine, in the context of the Australian diet, whether consuming residues of the chemical that may occur in food is within health-based guidance values.

FSANZ undertakes stakeholder consultation as part of our statutory proposal process. During this process, stakeholders may inform FSANZ of international actions and activities pertaining to specific chemicals and commodities.

In addition, as part of Australia's obligations under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement, FSANZ notifies the World Trade Organisation (WTO) of proposed MRL amendments to enable other WTO members to comment on them.