

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000202

Senator Leyonhjelm provided in writing.

Question

SWA - Additional regulation on APVMA approved AgVet chemical product labels

SWA's stated reasons for proceeding with the introduction of additional regulation is that the APVMA's risk assessment only ensures intrinsic hazards that are an actual risk and have not been appropriately mitigated to a negligible level appear as a hazard or a precautionary statement on the label. Can SWA confirm that its additional regulation will require additional hazard and precautionary statements on APVMA approved AgVet chemical product labels relating to intrinsic hazards where a technically proficient risk assessment has determined there is no or negligible risk?

Answer

Work health and safety legislation requires statements about all intrinsic hazards on AgVet chemicals labels as is the case for all other workplace hazardous chemicals. The example in the response to EMSQ16-000201 indicates that the APVMA risk assessment did not correctly assess the risk of spray drift, strengthening the case for including all hazards on the label.

The APVMA risk assessment does not replace the risk assessment conducted in the workplace where the chemical may be used, handled or stored in potentially different circumstances to those considered in the APVMA risk assessment.

The APVMA approved AgVet chemical labels communicate some hazards despite the presence of safety instructions for mitigating the risks associated with these hazards. This suggests the APVMA labels selectively understate the hazards of the chemical, most notably for chronic health effects.