

EPA Announces “Internal Pilot” for Green Disinfectant Claims

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces it will conduct an “internal pilot” in conjunction with the agency’s Design for the Environment Formulator Program (DfE) to further explore a policy change that allows claims of environmental preferability in regard to nonporous hard-surface disinfectants and sanitizers.

The agency’s plans were the result of a Feb. 3, 2009 meeting of the Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) Work Group on Comparative Claims in Washington, D.C.

“EPA’s announcement of the internal pilot is a positive step forward in developing an agency policy that meshes with the demands of today’s green marketplace,” said Bill Balek, director of Legislative Affairs, ISSA.

The purpose of the internal pilot program is to increase the understanding between EPA’s DfE scientists and the pesticide registration review staff as to what a review for environmental preferability entails and how that might interface with the pesticide registration process. (Note: By law, disinfectants are regulated as “pesticides.”)

“The internal pilot announced by EPA is a prudent and necessary step in developing a ‘green’ claims policy that ensures the continued efficacy [performance] of disinfectants and that allows purchasers to make informed decisions when selecting products with a preferred environmental, safety, and health profile,” said Stephen Ashkin, president of The Ashkin Group.

Both Balek and Ashkin participated at the recent meeting and in the summer of 2008 were appointed to the work group established for the purpose of making a policy recommendation in regard to allowing claims of environmental preferability for pesticide products including disinfectants. Current EPA policy prohibits such claims.

Under the internal pilot, both DfE and Office of Pesticide Program (OPP) staff will conduct concurrent evaluations of products previously recognized under the DfE program that mimic antimicrobial pesticide formulations.

Upon completion of the evaluation, DfE and OPP scientists will discuss the results and consider modifications to the criteria and/or process of the review for environmental attributes. If, at that time, EPA sees benefit in continuation of a pilot program, the agency anticipates launching an “external pilot” that would presumably involve the participation of industry.

The EPA also decided to evaluate a parallel approach by which “factual claims” could be made about a product’s ‘green’ attributes and established a work group that both Balek and Ashkin will serve on to develop options for further consideration.

Source: The Ashkin Group