



Fipronil Facts

Factsheet 2014-08

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) has the responsibility of assuring that pesticides are used safely and legally. The primary approach to achieving this goal is to educate pesticide applicators.

However, in cases where education has not worked, and it has been determined that pesticide misuse occurred, NDA will take appropriate enforcement action against persons and/or companies responsible. Additional restrictions on the use of pesticides which present harm to human health and the environment may be implemented as necessary.

What is Fipronil?

All pesticides, with few exceptions, must be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they can be offered for sale, distribution, or use in the United States. The active ingredient Fipronil is registered by EPA and can legally be applied for many commercial and residential applications, including the control of pests on lawn and turf, structures, ornamental sites where ants/termites exist, and on pets for flea/tick control. Fipronil is not registered for insect control as a surface spray for application inside a residential living area or inside a restaurant.

Toxicity

All chemicals, including pesticides such as Fipronil, are toxic. Toxicity is dependant on the dose an individual receives compared to one's body weight, although children are more sensitive to chemicals than adults. Undiluted, Fipronil is considered to be moderately toxic. However, when diluted with water, which is how the chemical is normally applied, it is considered to be low in toxicity. It binds tightly to treated surfaces and is not expected to be present in air samples.

It is unlikely that persons exposed to this material will experience health effects as a result of misapplication, especially if the chemical is diluted with water. This is because a person would have to consume a large amount of diluted product, much more than what is present, based on laboratory results.

NDA laboratory analysis of surface samples, collected in areas where Fipronil was believed to be misapplied, indicates that Fipronil may be present at low levels for a period of time after application.

Low levels of Fipronil residue may cause mild skin irritation. No human data is available on the long term health effects of low-level Fipronil exposure. However, test animals did not develop illness when exposed to low levels of this product over a long period of time. Fipronil residue is allowed at low levels on certain kinds of edible food. The half-life of Fipronil may be as high as 15 months for applications made indoors.

Clean-Up

NDA is recommending that building interiors be cleaned where illegal Fipronil residue may exist. Cleaning will help remove residue and reduce the risk of long term health effects.

- Detergent such as Pine Sol® or Murphy® Oil Soap will help to remove Fipronil residue from treated, flat surfaces (baseboards, floors, counters, cabinets, etc.). Use rubber gloves when applying cleaning agents to surfaces.
- A vacuum or a carpet cleaner that uses a detergent solution will help to remove Fipronil residue in carpets.
- In cases where excessive odor or a chemical residue may be present, mop the treated surface with a 10% (1.5 cups bleach to 1 gallon of water) bleach solution. Be aware that bleach solutions may discolor carpets or painted surfaces.
- Excess rinse water should be disposed of outdoors on areas of bare soil, such as landscape beds. Do not dispose of rinse water in storm drains or sewers.
- Keep children away from treated baseboards until they can be cleaned and the area is dried.
- If you suspect that cupboards were treated, dispose of any food stuff present. Dishes must be washed with a dish detergent using hot water. Then follow the cleaning procedures for flat surfaces.

Contact

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