

requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) do not apply. Nevertheless, the Agency has previously assessed whether establishing tolerances, exemptions from tolerances, raising tolerance levels or expanding exemptions might adversely impact small entities and concluded, as a generic matter, that there is no adverse economic impact. The factual basis for the Agency's generic certification for tolerance actions published on May 4, 1981 (46 FR 24950), and was provided to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

IV. Submission to Congress and the Comptroller General

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before a rule may take effect, the agency promulgating the rule must submit a rule report, which includes a copy of the rule, to each House of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. EPA will submit a report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of the rule in the **Federal Register**. This rule is not a "major rule" as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 180

Environmental protection, Administrative practice and procedure, Agricultural commodities, Pesticides and pests, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: February 18, 1998.

James Jones,

Director, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.

Therefore, 40 CFR chapter I is amended as follows:

PART 180—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for part 180 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 346a and 371.

§ 180.443 [Amended]

2. In § 180.443, by amending paragraph (b) in the table, for the commodity "Strawberries" by removing "March 31, 1998" and by adding in its place "3/31/99".

[FR Doc. 98-5409 Filed 3-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-F

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 180

[OPP-300621; FRL-5772-9]
RIN 2070-AB78

Pendimethalin; Extension of Tolerance for Emergency Exemptions

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule extends time-limited tolerances for residues of the herbicide pendimethalin and its metabolite in or on fresh mint hay at 0.1 part per million (ppm) and mint oil at 5.0 ppm for an additional 1-year period, to May 31, 1999. This action is in response to EPA's granting of an emergency exemption under section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) authorizing use of the pesticide on mint. Section 408(l)(6) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) requires EPA to establish a time-limited tolerance or exemption from the requirement for a tolerance for pesticide chemical residues in food that will result from the use of a pesticide under an emergency exemption granted by EPA under section 18 of FIFRA.

DATES: This regulation becomes effective March 4, 1998. Objections and requests for hearings must be received by EPA, on or before May 4, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written objections and hearing requests, identified by the docket control number, [OPP-300621], must be submitted to: Hearing Clerk (1900), Environmental Protection Agency, Rm. M3708, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Fees accompanying objections and hearing requests shall be labeled "Tolerance Petition Fees" and forwarded to: EPA Headquarters Accounting Operations Branch, OPP (Tolerance Fees), P.O. Box 360277M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251. A copy of any objections and hearing requests filed with the Hearing Clerk identified by the docket control number, [OPP-300621], must also be submitted to: Public Information and Records Integrity Branch, Information Resources and Services Division (7502C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. In person, bring a copy of objections and hearing requests to Rm. 119, Crystal Mall #2, 1921 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, VA.

A copy of objections and hearing requests filed with the Hearing Clerk

may also be submitted electronically by sending electronic mail (e-mail) to: opdocket@epamail.epa.gov. Follow the instructions in Unit II. of this preamble. No Confidential Business Information (CBI) should be submitted through e-mail.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: By mail: Stephen Schaible, Registration Division (7505C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Office location, telephone number, and e-mail address: Rm. 267, CM #2, 1921 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, VA 22202, (703)-308-9362; e-mail: schaible.stephen@epamail.epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: EPA issued a final rule, published in the **Federal Register** of May 23, 1997 (62 FR 28355) (FRL-5718-5), which announced that on its own initiative and under section 408(e) of the FFDCA, 21 U.S.C. 346a(e) and (l)(6), it established time-limited tolerances for the residues of pendimethalin and its 3,5-dinitrobenzyl alcohol metabolite (CL 202,347) in or on fresh mint hay at 0.1 ppm and mint oil at 5.0 ppm, with an expiration date of May 31, 1998. EPA established the tolerances because section 408(l)(6) of the FFDCA requires EPA to establish a time-limited tolerance or exemption from the requirement for a tolerance for pesticide chemical residues in food that will result from the use of a pesticide under an emergency exemption granted by EPA under section 18 of FIFRA. Such tolerances can be established without providing notice or period for public comment.

EPA received a request to extend the use of pendimethalin on mint for this year growing season due to the continued emergency situation for Idaho, Oregon and Washington mint growers. Due to the potential spread of *Verticillium* wilt by tillage equipment, mechanical control of kochia and redroot pigweed is no longer considered a viable option. The continuous use of terbacil in past years has resulted in development of resistance to this chemical in pigweed and kochia, resulting in inadequate control of this pest by registered alternatives. After having reviewed the submission, EPA concurs that emergency conditions exist for these States. EPA has authorized under FIFRA section 18 the use of pendimethalin on mint for control of kochia and redroot pigweed in mint.

EPA assessed the potential risks presented by residues of pendimethalin in or on fresh mint hay and mint oil. In doing so, EPA considered the new safety standard in FFDCA section 408(b)(2),

and decided that the necessary tolerances under FFDCA section 408(l)(6) would be consistent with the new safety standard and with FIFRA section 18. The data and other relevant material have been evaluated and discussed in the final rule of May 23, 1997 (62 FR 28355). Based on that data and information considered, the Agency reaffirms that extension of the time-limited tolerances will continue to meet the requirements of section 408(l)(6). Therefore, the time-limited tolerances are extended for an additional 1-year period. Although these tolerances will expire and are revoked on May 31, 1999, under FFDCA section 408(l)(5), residues of the pesticide not in excess of the amounts specified in the tolerance remaining in or on fresh mint hay or mint oil after that date will not be unlawful, provided the pesticide is applied in a manner that was lawful under FIFRA and the application occurred prior to the revocation of the tolerances. EPA will take action to revoke these tolerances earlier if any experience with, scientific data on, or other relevant information on this pesticide indicate that the residues are not safe.

I. Objections and Hearing Requests

The new FFDCA section 408(g) provides essentially the same process for persons to "object" to a tolerance regulation issued by EPA under new section 408(e) and (l)(6) as was provided in the old section 408 and in section 409. However, the period for filing objections is 60 days, rather than 30 days. EPA currently has procedural regulations which govern the submission of objections and hearing requests. These regulations will require some modification to reflect the new law. However, until those modifications can be made, EPA will continue to use those procedural regulations with appropriate adjustments to reflect the new law.

Any person may, by May 4, 1998, file written objections to any aspect of this regulation and may also request a hearing on those objections. Objections and hearing requests must be filed with the Hearing Clerk, at the address given above (40 CFR 178.20). A copy of the objections and/or hearing requests filed with the Hearing Clerk should be submitted to the OPP docket for this rulemaking. The objections submitted must specify the provisions of the regulation deemed objectionable and the grounds for the objections (40 CFR 178.25). Each objection must be accompanied by the fee prescribed by 40 CFR 180.33(i). If a hearing is requested, the objections must include a

statement of the factual issues on which a hearing is requested, the requestor's contentions on such issues, and a summary of any evidence relied upon by the requestor (40 CFR 178.27). A request for a hearing will be granted if the Administrator determines that the material submitted shows the following: There is genuine and substantial issue of fact; there is a reasonable possibility that available evidence identified by the requestor would, if established, resolve one or more of such issues in favor of the requestor, taking into account uncontested claims or facts to the contrary; and resolution of the factual issues in the manner sought by the requestor would be adequate to justify the action requested (40 CFR 178.32). Information submitted in connection with an objection or hearing request may be claimed confidential by marking any part or all of that information as CBI. Information so marked will not be disclosed except in accordance with procedures set forth in 40 CFR part 2. A copy of the information that does not contain CBI must be submitted for inclusion in the public record. Information not marked confidential may be disclosed publicly by EPA without prior notice.

II. Public Record and Electronic Submissions

The official record for this rulemaking, as well as the public version, as described above will be kept in paper form. Accordingly, EPA will transfer any copies of objections and hearing requests received electronically into printed, paper form as they are received and will place the paper copies in the official rulemaking record which will also include all comments submitted directly in writing. The official rulemaking record is the paper record maintained at the Virginia address in "ADDRESSES" at the beginning of this document.

Electronic comments may be sent directly to EPA at:
opp-docket@epamail.epa.gov.

Electronic objections and hearing requests must be submitted as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Objections and hearing requests will also be accepted on disks in WordPerfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format. All copies of objections and hearing requests in electronic form must be identified by the docket control number [OPP-300621]. No CBI should be submitted through e-mail. Electronic copies of objections and hearing requests on this rule may be filed online at many Federal Depository Libraries.

III. Regulatory Assessment Requirements

This final rule extends time-limited tolerances that were previously extended by EPA under FFDCA section 408(d) in response to a petition submitted to the Agency. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has exempted these types of actions from review under Executive Order 12866, entitled Regulatory Planning and Review (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993). In addition, this final rule does not contain any information collections subject to OMB approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, or impose any enforceable duty or contain any unfunded mandate as described under Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA) (Pub. L. 104-4). Nor does it require any prior consultation as specified by Executive Order 12875, entitled Enhancing the Intergovernmental Partnership (58 FR 58093, October 28, 1993), or special considerations as required by Executive Order 12898, entitled Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994), or require OMB review in accordance with Executive Order 13045, entitled Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997).

Since this extension of existing time-limited tolerances does not require the issuance of a proposed rule, the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) do not apply. Nevertheless, the Agency has previously assessed whether establishing tolerances, exemptions from tolerances, raising tolerance levels or expanding exemptions might adversely impact small entities and concluded, as a generic matter, that there is no adverse economic impact. The factual basis for the Agency's generic certification for tolerance actions published on May 4, 1981 (46 FR 24950), and was provided to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

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report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of the rule in the **Federal Register**. This rule is not a "major rule" as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 180

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Dated: February 18, 1998.

James Jones,

Director, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.

Therefore, 40 CFR chapter I is amended as follows:

PART 180—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for part 180 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 346a and 371.

§ 180.361 [Amended]

2. In § 180.361, by amending paragraph (b) in the table, for the commodities "Mint hay, fresh" and "Mint oil" by removing "5/31/98" and by adding in its place "5/31/99".

[FR Doc. 98-5410 Filed 3-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-F

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

46 CFR Part 56

[USCG-1998-3560]

Coast Guard Acceptance of Resiliently Seated Valves

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of policy; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces an interim policy concerning the acceptance of resiliently seated valves as an alternatives to the requirements in 46 CFR 56.20-15. Additionally, the Coast Guard requests the public's comments on how the Coast Guard should proceed in the future regarding any regulatory revision of the current criteria for the acceptance of resiliently seated valves as contained in 46 CFR 56.20-15.

DATES: Comments must reach the Docket Management Facility on or before May 4, 1998.

ADDRESSES: You may mail comments to the Docket Management Facility, [USCG-1998-3560], U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL-401, 400 7th Street SW., Washington DC 20590-0001, or deliver them to Room PL-401, located on the Plaza Level of the Nassif Building at the same address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is (202) 366-9329.

The Docket Management Facility maintains the public docket for this notice. Comments, and documents as indicated in this preamble, will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at Room PL-401, located on the Plaza Level of the Nassif Building at the address above between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also access this docket on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Wayne M. Lundy, Systems Engineering Division (G-MSE-3), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, telephone (202) 267-2206 for questions concerning the substance of this notice or Carol Kelly, Coast Guard Dockets Team Leader, or Paulette Twine, Chief, Documentary Services Division, U.S. Department of Transportation, telephone (202) 366-9329 for questions concerning the filing and reviewing of comments.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Request for Comments

Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this notice [USCG-1998-3560] and the reason for each comment. Please submit two copies of all comments and attachments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing to the DOT Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**. Persons wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comments should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes. The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period and may change this policy in view of the comments.

Background and Purpose

Over the past twelve months, the Coast Guard has received several inquiries from the marine industry, including valve manufacturers and distributors, regarding the acceptance criteria for resiliently seated valves addressed in 46 CFR 56.20-15. The current issue is whether the existing acceptance criteria found in the 1989 version of 46 CFR 56.20-15. The current

issue is whether the existing acceptance criteria found in the 1989 version of 46 CFR 56.20-15 is significantly stricter than the criteria previously applied to the resiliently seated valves grandfathered by the regulatory project on vessel piping systems (CGD 77-140; 50 FR 1072, January 9, 1985, and 54 FR 40592, October 2, 1989). In the preamble to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on vessel piping systems (CGD 77-140; 50 FR 1074, January 9, 1985), Category A resiliently seated valves were previously recognized by the Coast Guard as acceptable for continued service, without additional testing, provided there were no changes in the design or materials, and no casualty data or Coast Guard tests which would indicate a need to withdraw the acceptance. The preamble to the Final Rule on vessel piping systems (CGD 77-140; 54 FR 40592, October 2, 1989), stated that 46 CFR 56.20-15 was revised to clarify the requirements of resiliently seated valves. However, neither the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking nor the Final Rule discussed that the intent of the regulatory changes to 46 CFR 56.20-15 was to increase the acceptance criteria for new resiliently seated valves beyond the previous acceptance criteria applied to resiliently seated valves.

Recent inquiries have caused the Coast Guard to review and re-evaluate past policies and practices employed in the development and evolution of the acceptance criteria for resiliently seated valves over the past 35 years. In addition, the Coast Guard reviewed its casualty data available during the same period. From this effort, the Coast Guard concluded that the existing acceptance criteria contained in 46 CFR 56.20-15 did, in fact, exceed the acceptance criteria applied to previously accepted resiliently seated valves, but that the change in acceptance criteria was unintended. Additionally, the Coast Guard was unable to identify any casualty data which justified an increase in the stringency of the criteria for acceptance of new resiliently seated valves.

As a result of this review, the Coast Guard will, as an interim policy until a regulatory project can be published to revise 46 CFR 56.20-15, consider new resiliently seated valves for acceptance as Category A that demonstrate a level of safety equivalent to previously accepted resiliently seated valves that have shown satisfactory service for at least 5 years. This may be done by demonstrating that the valves provide for performance or dimensional equivalence to previously accepted resiliently seated valve designs. Precedent for acceptance of equivalents