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Agence de  
réglementation  
de la lutte  
antiparasitaire

2008-2648

DEC 16 2009

Keith Knowles  
Manitoba Conservation Forestry Branch  
200 Sauteaux Cres., PO Box 70  
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3

Dear Mr. Knowles:

**Re: Notice of Objection – RVD2008-18 *Bacillus thuringiensis***

We have carefully reviewed your Notice of Objection, filed in July of 2008, regarding the Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) decision to continue the registration of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (RVD2008-18). We are aware of your long-standing interest in *Bacillus thuringiensis*, and continue to make every effort to answer your questions and address your concerns.

Under the *Pest Control Products Act*, any person who believes there is a scientific basis for reconsideration of a decision to which subsection 28(1) applies can file a Notice of Objection within 60 days of the publication of the decision. Objections are expected to focus on the scientific basis of the decision related to health and environmental risks, the value of the pesticide and the need for this decision to be taken to an external panel of experts for consideration of the scientific argument presented in the Notice and to obtain advice to the Minister in that regard.

When a notice of objection is filed, a team of PMRA scientists, who were not involved in the original decision, is established. The team considers the scientific basis for the objection and determines if the criteria for the establishment of a review panel have been met.

Criteria for establishing a review panel include:

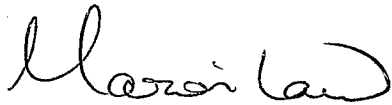
- a. whether the information in the notice raises scientifically founded doubt as to the validity of the evaluation or re-evaluation of the health and environmental risks and the value of the pesticide; and
- b. whether the advice of a panel of expert scientists would assist in addressing the objection.

.../2

The concerns you raised in your objection were addressed during the extensive review and consultation process for the re-evaluation of *Bacillus thuringiensis*, and in our previous communications with you previously. Our team of PMRA scientists has carefully and extensively reviewed your questions and concerns, and has responded to each item separately in the attached document with information that was considered in the re-evaluation decision of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The team did not identify any scientifically founded doubt with respect to the validity of the PMRA re-evaluation decision in the information you provided in your objection. As a result this notice of objection does not fulfill the criteria to establish a review panel to reconsider the decision for continued registration of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. However, some statements will be amended on the product labels, as outlined in the attached detailed response.

We trust that the information provided in the attached detailed response provides some clarity to the issues you raised. The PMRA continues to put human health and the environment at the forefront of our regulatory activities, and will only register products for which there is reasonable certainty that no harm will result from their use as directed, including *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

Sincerely,



Marion Law  
Chief Registrar

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PEST MANAGEMENT REGULATORY AGENCY

Attachment:  
Detailed Response to Notice of Objection

Attachment: A  
Sub. No. 2008-2648

## **Detailed Response to Notice of Objection – RVD2008-18 *Bacillus thuringiensis***

The notice of objection, filed under subsection 35(1) of the *Pest Control Products Act* (PCPA), by Mr. Keith Knowles regarding the re-evaluation decision for *Bacillus thuringiensis* has now been reviewed and assessed in accordance with the Act and Regulations.

The following information was received and reviewed in support of the notice of objection:

- Attachment to notice of objection (rationale)

### **1) Personal Protective Equipment, Aquatic Statement (or Aerial Application?)**

**“On behalf of Manitoba Conservation, enclosed is a Notice of Objection to a Registration Decision under Subsection 35(1) of the *Pest Control Products Act*, pertaining to the May 6, 2008 reevaluation of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt).**

**This objection pertains to the restrictive nature of wording on the Bt label with regard to product handling and aerial application. This wording is contrary to scientific documentation stating that Bt products have been demonstrated to have no adverse health effects after occupational exposure and have been deemed safe for use in controlling insect pests in forest environments containing aquatic habitats.”**

#### **i) Product handling**

PMRA is assuming the objector has a concern with the requirement of a NIOSH-approved respirator mask on all *B. thuringiensis*-based products. The current PMRA policy on the requirement of a dust/mist filtering respirator mask (MSH/NIOSH approval number prefix TC-21C) or a NIOSH-approved respirator with any N-95, R-95, P-95 or HE filter for biological products was largely adopted due to hygienic/sensitization concerns associated with the use of large concentrations of microorganisms as well as harmonization activities such as joint reviews under North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In some cases, masks/respirators may also be required as a result of acute mammalian testing (i.e., pulmonary studies).

Microbial pest control products contain numerous biological macromolecules associated with not only the microbial pest control agent, but those associated with possible microbial contaminants, and growth medium constituents as well. Many of these biological materials could, in theory, induce allergies in susceptible individuals via a number of possible routes of exposure. PMRA is aware of standard OECD and U.S. EPA test methods for evaluating the sensitization potential of products, however, these methods only measure the sensitization potential of compounds on a small number of test animals via the dermal/intradermal route. Since these studies do not include a larger number of animals to account for natural variation in any given population and only measure the sensitization potential of samples via the dermal/intradermal route (e.g., not inhalation or intranasal routes), they do not entirely address PMRA's concerns with these types of

product. PMRA is also aware of growing evidence that, at certain exposure and/or at certain periods of life, exposure to some microorganisms may be beneficial and may even reduce the risk for allergies. These findings, however, are not definitive meaning that some individuals can still develop allergies despite early exposure to bacteria. In addition, some researchers noted that, if the immune system was already primed to produce allergies, microbial antigens could still exacerbate existing allergic conditions. Also, positive sensitization reactions were reported in several dermal sensitization studies conducted on previously registered and currently registered products (see "Dermal sensitization studies" below) despite the limitations noted above.

The PMRA would like to add that the requirement for a NIOSH-approved respirator/mask is also justified by findings in acute pulmonary studies. Acute pulmonary studies conducted on various *B. thuringiensis*-based products have demonstrated severe effects at high doses (i.e.,  $\geq 10^8$  colony forming units per animal; see "Pulmonary studies" below). Although these effects are not expected to occur following a single operational exposure, the observed persistence of *B. thuringiensis* in the lungs could lead to an accumulation of spores in the lungs of applicators, and handlers/mixers through repeated exposure during an entire use season. The above-noted respirators/masks can significantly reduce the accumulation of this microorganism in the lungs of workers in situations where inhalation exposure is likely. Please note, however, that the PMRA has recently made changes to the aerial application instructions *B. thuringiensis*-based products. The changes are summarized as follows:

- the handler requirement for a NIOSH-approved respirator/mask and eye goggles may be waived when handlers use closed systems to load *B. thuringiensis*-based products onto aircrafts;
- when reduced personal protective equipment is worn because a closed system is being used, the respirator/mask and eye goggles must be immediately available for use in the event of an emergency such as a spill or equipment breakdown; and
- as noted in the Re-evaluation Decision Document, RVD2008-18, the requirement for eye goggles may be waived entirely if indicated by eye irritation test data or an acceptable rationale.

As a result, the following aerial application instructions and precautions will be required on all *B. thuringiensis*-based products that have aerial applications:

**"Aerial Application Instructions:**

Apply only by fixed-wing or rotary aircraft equipment that has been functionally and operationally calibrated for the atmospheric conditions of the area and the application rates and conditions of this label.

Label rates, conditions and precautions are product-specific. Apply only at the rate recommended for aerial application on this label. Where no rate for aerial application appears for the specific use, this product cannot be applied by any type of aerial equipment.

Ensure uniform application by using appropriate marking devices and/or electronic guidance equipment.

**Use Precautions:**

Apply only when meteorological conditions at the treatment site allow for complete and even coverage. Apply only when meteorological conditions are in compliance with local and/or provincial authorities.

**Operator Precautions:**

DO NOT allow the pilot to mix product to be loaded onto the aircraft. However, loading of premixed product with a closed system is permitted. It is desirable that the pilot have communication capabilities at each treatment site at the time of application.

The field crew and the mixer/loaders must wear the personal protective equipment described in the PRECAUTIONS section of this label. When handlers/loaders use closed systems to load the product onto the aircraft, the handler requirement for eye goggles and a NIOSH-approved respirator/mask with any N-95, R-95, or P-95 filter for biological products may be waived. When reduced personal protective equipment is worn, the respirator/mask and eye goggles must be immediately available for use in an emergency such as a spill or equipment breakdown.

All personnel on the job site must wash hands and face thoroughly before eating and drinking. Protective clothing must be washed before reuse. Decontaminate aircraft cockpits and vehicle cabs if contamination occurs.

**Product Precautions:**

Read and understand the entire label before opening this product. If you have questions, call the manufacturer at [insert toll free number] or obtain technical advice from the distributor or from your provincial agricultural or forestry representative. Application of this specific product must meet and/or conform to the aerial uses and rates on this label.”

For *B. thuringiensis* subsp. *israelensis* (Bti)-based products, handlers, mixers and loaders of commercial and restricted use products are required to wear the listed personal protective equipment. As noted in Re-evaluation Decision Document, RVD2008-18, *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *israelensis* applicators may remove gloves, eye goggles and respirators/masks if the design and delivery of the application apparatus reduces exposure to a negligible level.

*Dermal sensitization studies*

PMRA 1381470	2000. Skin Sensitization Study in Guinea Pigs, DACO: M4.6.
PMRA 1193164	Human Health and Safety Testing, Reporting of Hypersensitivity Incidents, Dermal Sensitization Study in Guinea Pigs, Final Report, Completed December 8, 1997
PMRA 1208220	Dermal Sensitization Study of Dipel R6AF in Guinea Pigs (L08151-B), DACO: 4.6.6.
PMRA 1247735	Hypersensitivity Study on Teknar in the Guinea Pig, DACO: 4.6.6.
PMRA1169441	Dermal Sensitization – Guinea Pig, DACO: 4.2.6

*Pulmonary studies*

PMRA 1174032	Acute Pulmonary Toxicity/Pathogenicity Study of Dipel Technical Material ( <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> var <i>Kurstaki</i> ) in Rats, Final Report, DACO: M4.2.3.
PMRA 1174179	Four-Week Subacute Inhalation Toxicity Study in Guinea Pigs. Dipel. Final Report. October 17, 1973. DACO: M4.2.3.
PMRA 1381464	1988, Murine Pulmonary Toxicity of <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> sp. Microbial Pesticides, DACO: M4.2.3.
PMRA 1465204	1990, Acute Pulmonary Toxicity / Pathogenicity Study of Vectobac Technical Material ( <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> var. <i>israelensis</i> ) in Rats, Document 5, DACO: M4.2.3.
PMRA 1174389	Acute Pulmonary/Pathogenicity Study in Rats, DACO: M4.2.3.
PMRA 1225754	Acute Pulmonary Toxicity and Infectivity to Rats, DACO: 4.2.3, 4.6.3.

*Note:* These study reports are available in the PMRA Reading Room.

ii) Aerial application

The PMRA is assuming that the objector has a concern with the statement, "Do not apply directly to aquatic habitats ...". The PMRA wants to clarify that this statement was intended to prevent all aquatic uses (direct applications) of *B. thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki* (Btk)-based products since there are no registered aquatic uses for this microbial pest control agent. The intent was not to limit indirect aquatic applications which may occur during forestry applications, especially in small aquatic habitats that are intermingled in forests. As noted in the Re-evaluation Decision Document, RVD2008-18, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, PMRA recognized that the statement could have alternate meanings to other jurisdictions so the following alternate statement was drafted in consultation with stakeholders:

"As this product is not registered for the control of pests in aquatic systems, DO NOT use to control aquatic pests."

The previous statement will no longer be required on the label. In addition, the PMRA will no longer require the following statement under the "Directions for use" section since it makes reference to sensitive aquatic habitats:

"BEFORE AERIAL APPLICATIONS TO FORESTS - Consult the most recent provincially approved topographic maps of the area to be treated (1: 50,000) or more up-to-date information (e.g. GPS systems) to identify sensitive aquatic habitats. Sensitive aquatic habitats include:

- a) All running (lotic) and standing (lentic) water bodies, including impoundments, beaver ponds and bog ponds, that appear on the map or GPS system;
- b) Running (lotic) and standing (lentic) water bodies that do not appear on the map or GPS system but are visible from the air."

