

OZONews

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & related issues compiled by:
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1. Companies playing 'dirty' at Sydney Olympics:

Environmental watchdog Greenpeace has branded McDonald's and Coca-Cola 'dirty' Olympic sponsors. Greenpeace spokesperson Corin Millains said that the companies planned to use global-warming hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in their refrigeration systems at Olympic venues in contradiction of the guidelines for the Sydney games. "They have forgotten about the green games in their race for marketing and profits," Millias said. "The green games is under threat from dirty sponsors."

Source: The Financial Express, New Delhi, 16 April 2000

2. Campaign to press for eco-friendly fridges:

Your refrigerator could be too hot for you in a few years from now. Indian refrigerators use CFCs, HFCs or HCFCs as coolants and insulation lining producing substances to maintain low temperature. CFCs are highly ozone depleting and are required to be phased out by the refrigeration and air-conditioning sectors in the developing countries by 2003 as per the Montreal Protocol for the Protection of Ozone Layer, 1987. HFCs and HCFCs are ozone friendly but cause global warming. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 has labelled them as control substances and they, too, have to be phased out sooner than later.

Source: The Financial Express, New Delhi, 16 April 2000

3. Methyl bromide problem: We need alternatives, soon, to this nasty habit

California's Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has proposed new rules to govern the use of the soil fumigant methyl bromide and -- surprise, surprise -- almost nobody likes them. Environmentalists and farm labor advocates say the proposed regulations -- which dictate how much of the highly toxic biocide can be used during a single application, limit the time workers may spend applying it and establish buffer zones near neighboring property -- don't do enough to protect children's and workers' health and consider only acute, not chronic, exposure. Agriculture interests complain that the buffer zones and application restrictions will make using methyl bromide so time-consuming and costly as to put heavily reliant strawberry and nut-tree growers out of business.

DPR has heard an earful from both sides in a recent series of hearings on the proposed regulations and has until June 1 to issue its final rules. But the quibbling over how methyl bromide should be applied skirts a much larger agricultural and public health problem that policy-makers have yet to fully confront.

Methyl bromide is an ozone-depleting compound that scientists have linked to an increased incidence of skin cancer, and it faces a well warranted international death sentence. Under the Montreal Protocol -- a 1987 treaty designed to protect the ozone layer that shields Earth from harmful ultraviolet rays -- the United States was scheduled to join other developed nations in banning methyl bromide by 2001. Two years ago, citing a lack of alternatives and concerns about large economic losses Congress -- at the behest of Rep. Vic Fazio -- pushed back the deadline to 2005.

What's needed now -- for the sake of agriculture, the environment and public health -- is serious, well-funded research into alternatives to methyl bromide. Nobody is collecting data on what alternatives farmers are already using with success. Nobody is talking about what financial incentives might be needed to help wean coastal strawberry growers, who are the biggest users of the fumigant. So far, the research investment has been modest: about \$4 million in state funds over the last decade and \$250,000 in federal funds. Experts say it could cost as much as \$20 million to finance larger scale experiments and field trials.

One consequence of the failure to adequately fund alternative research will be mounting pressure to delay the methyl bromide phaseout yet again. But that will be a victory for nobody. Methyl bromide needs to go. California has a responsibility to make its departure a smooth transition, not a train wreck.

Source: [Sacramento Bee 03 April 2000](#)

4. Ozone therapy: Reduction of ozone-depleting substances could actually lead to the ozone layer repairing itself

It is about the ozone layer. And it is not bad news. Some Australian scientists say if the amount of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) being released is reduced, the most famous layer of the Earth's atmosphere will begin to repair itself. However, before you rush to go tell your friends, bear in mind that the first clear signs of this 'healing' will take at least half a century to appear.

Paul Fraser of the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organization (CSIRO), Australia's premier scientific research establishment, says any repairs in the ozone layer will set in only after the year 2050, and the credible improvements may not be apparent for a further 20 years. Yet CSIRO's findings come as a bit of a relief, especially after the us National Aeronautical and Space Administration's Goddard Space Flight Centre measured the thickness of the ozone layer over the North Sea between Scotland and Norway on November 30, 1999, and found that it was just above half the global average (*ENN Daily News*, December 4, 1999).

The ozone layer, 14-32 km above the surface in the stratosphere, shields the Earth from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the Sun, and its thinning is expected to cause a range of public health problems. Chlorine and bromine atoms released from gases like chlorofluorocarbons (cfc) and halons cause this thinning. While cfc are industrial chemicals used in a range of products like refrigerators, halons were used in fire extinguishers till recently.

Although the results of the Montreal Protocol, a pact designed to save the ozone layer, is showing encouraging results in the reduction of the use of ODS, these chemicals have a long life and will keep depleting the ozone layer for several years. The thinning of the layer has stopped growing over the Arctic, but it is still continuing over Antarctica and parts of Australia. Each year, the size of the hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica peaks around September, covering an area thrice the size of Australia. At the Halley Bay of the frozen continent, measurements showed ozone concentrations to be less than half of what they were in the 1960s. The hole has become a major rallying point in environmental campaigns across the world.

Source: [Down to Earth, Vol. 8, No 21 March 31, 2000](#)

5. Rules framed for ozone depleting substances:

The Indian ministry of environment and forests has framed the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation) Rules 2000, covering various aspects of production, sale, reclamation, destruction, export and import of ozone depleting substances (ODS).

Source: [The Financial Express, New Delhi, 07 March 2000](#)

