

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & related issues compiled by: UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme 15 January 2001

## **Table of Contents:**

- 1. Global Coalition Urges China to Control Sales of Methyl Bromide
- 2. Strawberry Fields May Not Be Forever
- 3. Montreal Protocol Gets More Muscle

## 1. Global Coalition Urges China to Control Sales of Methyl Bromide

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, January 5, 2001 - Fourteen consumer, health and environmental organizations from around the world have called on the government of the People's Republic of China to end the rapidly increasing production and consumption of the toxic, ozone-depleting pesticide methyl bromide. In a November letter to China's Environmental Protection Agency, non-governmental organizations (NGO) from six countries also urged the Chinese government to ratify an international treaty that sets a global ban on this pesticide.

China has become the leading producer and consumer of methyl bromide in the developing world. According to a 1999 report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, China's consumption of methyl bromide was expected to increase from less than 500 tons in 1995 to over 4,000 tons in 2002 - more than a 10-fold increase. In 1998, China produced 2,320 tons methyl bromide, making that country the largest producer by far in the developing world.

The groups also expressed concern about the aggressive marketing of methyl bromide by the Linhai Jianxin Chemical Co. Ltd. (based in Zhejiang, China). The letter states, "We are alarmed that a company in China is conducting a worldwide marketing effort for this dangerous pesticide that is known to be a potent ozone depleter and is already being phased out in industrialized countries. The Chinese government should investigate this type of activity, which clearly undermines the goals of the Montreal Protocol and its 175 signatory nations."

Source: EarthVision Environmental News, 4 January 2001
Full Text @: http://www.igc.org/panna/resources/panups/panup\_20010104.dv.html

## 2. Strawberry Fields May Not Be Forever

The phasing out of one of the nation's most widely used pesticides will begin taking a bite out of California's strawberry business this year, experts say, raising costs, lowering yields and giving Mexican imports a competitive advantage.

researchers at UC Davis estimate that California's nearly \$850-million strawberry industry, which produces most of the nation's crop, will lose 20% of its production with the ban on the fumigant methyl bromide.

Other treatments for combating the same insects, weeds and diseases that afflict strawberry plants are in short supply or their use is restricted in certain areas.

However, environmentalists and researchers say growers can still produce ripe, juicy strawberries, free of pests and disease, without using the ozone-thinning chemical in their fields.

Some growers are expected to go organic, using chemical-free methods to banish pests. But experts say most will simply revert to using older pesticides, such as metam sodium or chloropicrin, or wait for new pesticides, such as the experimental InLine, to become available in California.

In the short term, however, scientists say strawberry farmers will struggle to find enough of any one product to do the job.

Source: Los Angeles Times, By Melinda Fulmer, Times Staff Writer, 11 January 2001 Full Text @: http://www.latimes.com/news/science/environ/20010111/t000002795.html

## 3. Montreal Protocol Gets More Muscle

On Jan. 1, a new set of amendments to the Montreal Protocol took effect to further control the production and use of chemicals known to deplete the Earth's ozone layer.

The new amendments require member countries to:

freeze the production of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) used in refrigeration and cooling equipment; report any information on the use of methyl bromide, which mainly finds use in pesticides; and ban the production, consumption, and international trade of bromochloromethane, a chemical used primarily as a fire-extinguishing agent.

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer initially was signed in 1987. At the time, the international community began to accept the evidence that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons were dramatically thinning the ozone layer-creating the so-called hole in the layer.

The original list of 24 countries that signed the Montreal Protocol has expanded to 175.

In October, an international conference of 300 scientists in Buenos Aires concluded that the ban on ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons is beginning to have an effect and predicted that the ozone hole will likely close within 50 years. However, they cautioned, the recovery is not likely to start for several years and, because of natural fluctuations in weather patterns, will not necessarily show a steady decline.

Source: Pollution Online, Edited by Paul Hersch, Managing Editor, 01 January 2001
Full Text @: http://www.pollutiononline.com/content/news/article.asp?DocID={97994907-E659-11D4-A76F-00D0B7694F32}&Bucket=HomeLatestHeadlines

United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (UNEP DTIE) OzonAction Programme is providing **OzoNews** as an internal information service to keep UNEP DTIE staff informed on current ozone depletion & related issues, to promote information exchange and stimulate discussion about ozone protection. The views expressed in articles written by external authors are the viewpoints of those authors and do not necessarily represent the policy or viewpoint of UNEP. Additionally, the citing of commercial products or services does not constitute endorsement of those products or services by UNEP.

If you have guestions, comments, ideas for future articles, or you want to discontinue receiving this update,

please contact: Mrs. Samira de Gobert, Tel. 0144371452 Email: sami.degobert@unep.fr

Prepared by: Samira de Gobert, Information Assistant

Reviewer: Jim Curlin, Information Officer