

OZONews

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1- Armenia To Implement Protection Program With UNEP Support

Armenian officials met last Thursday to discuss the implementation of a national program to curb ozone-layer depletion. The U.N. Environment Program will support the implementation, they said. In an effort to comply with the 1987 Montreal Protocol -- which Armenia joined in 1999 -- the Central Asian nation plans to ban the import of items deemed harmful to the ozone layer. The program also aims to replace environmentally hazardous equipment at refrigerator maker Saga and Armkhimbyt Armenian Chemical Domestic. The implementation is slated to begin this year and continue through 2006 (Arminfo/BBC Monitoring, Jan. 18).

Article in: UN-Wire, 24 January 2002 @ <http://www.unfoundation.org/unwire/current.asp#23252>

2- Report on EU Atmospheric Research Highlights Increase in 'Mini' Ozone Holes

An assessment report on European research into the stratosphere, released on 21 January, has concluded that the occurrence of mini ozone holes over Europe is on the increase... The increase in the frequency of ozone 'mini-holes' over Europe is linked in the report to climatic changes and atmospheric circulation in the north Atlantic and Europe. The report also reveals conflicting trends for two of the gases responsible for ozone depletion - bromine, which is on the increase, and chlorine, which is expected to reach pre-ozone hole levels in around 50 years' time. When this level is reached, the report says, full ozone recovery is expected. It says that any ozone recovery could become measurable around 2010... Approval has recently been given to 12 new EU research projects on ozone, UV radiation and aviation impacts, worth a total of 19.4 million euro. The projects will be supported during the coming 2 to 3 years under the key action 'Global change, climate and biodiversity' of the EC's Environment and Sustainable Development programme.

Full text @: [http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-](http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:17883)

[bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:17883](http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:17883)

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Source: CORDIS News service, 22 January 2002

3- AgraQuest Pins Hopes on Fungus in Pesticide Wars

AgraQuest Inc. of Davis plans to use a gas-emitting fungus discovered in the rain forests of Central America to make an environmentally friendly alternative to the widely used, ozone-eating fumigant called methyl bromide. AgraQuest has licensed rights to the fungus, *Muscodora albus*, and related strains from Montana State University professor Gary Strobel, who found it during an expedition in Central America. AgraQuest's fumigant is expected to control bacteria and fungi that cause diseases in plants, as well as microorganisms that cause disease in humans. It's been tested in the laboratory as a seed treatment and soil amendment, and has also shown the ability to kill nematodes and hatching insects. It doesn't appear to be toxic to mammals, which gives it an advantage to other fumigants used as methyl bromide alternatives... AgraQuest still has a long way to go before it's marketing a product from the fungus. The company first has to conduct field studies to demonstrate the safety and efficacy of the fumigant, and then it has to apply for approval to sell it from the federal and state environmental protection agencies. The process could take years... The United States is in the midst of a gradual cutback in production and importation of the chemical. In 1999 the U.S. EPA required a 25 percent cutback, and that was increased to 50 percent last year. The chemical's increasing scarcity has been raising its price. The cost of a pound of methyl bromide in the United States nearly quadrupled to \$4.50 from 1995 to 2001 as production declined and levies were slapped on imports. All-in-all, it's not

easy or cheap for growers to use methyl bromide anymore. "The whole agricultural industry has been trying to find and fund alternatives," said California Farm Bureau Federation spokesman Bob Krauter. There are other fumigants, like 1,3-dichloropropene and metam sodium. But they tend to be highly toxic and often subject to restrictions... In 1999 the state legislature allocated \$1 million to a University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program on methyl bromide alternatives. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has funded research on methyl bromide alternatives ranging from using mint oil to fumigate rice weevils in stored grain to testing the effectiveness of propargyl, a chemical not registered with the U.S. EPA as a pesticide, for treating fields before flowers to be sold in bouquets.

Full text @: <http://sacramento.bcentral.com/sacramento/stories/2002/01/21/story6.html>

Source: Sacramento Business Journal, 18 January 2002, By: Celia Lamb, Staff Writer

4- ATOFINA Resolves Violations In Alabama, Kentucky, Texas

ATOFINA Chemicals Inc. of Philadelphia, Pa., has entered into a settlement that will result in significant pollution control measures at the company's facilities in Alabama, Kentucky and Texas. The consent decree, which is subject to a 30-day public comment period, concludes an extensive multi-statute investigation of ATOFINA (formerly known as "Elf Atochem, North America Inc."), a worldwide specialty chemicals company with 26 manufacturing facilities in the United States. At an estimated capital cost of \$5.3 million, ATOFINA has committed to implementing pollution control measures that will reduce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emissions by approximately 2,500 tons per year and ozone-depleting substances (ODS) emissions by 750 tons per year from its facilities in Kentucky and Alabama... ODS emissions are key contributors to the reduction in tropospheric ozone, which protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation... The settlement resolves environmental claims brought under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.

Article @: <http://www.dakotacg.com/releases/pa/jan02/hq0114i.htm>

Source: Dakota Communications Group, 11 January 2002

OzoNews is available on the OzonAction Programme web site @:

<http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/compliance/ozonews/main.html>

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