



J. B. KENDRICK JR.
*Vice President
Agricultural Sciences
Director, Agricultural
Experiment Station
University of
California*

PESTICIDES FOR SPECIALTY CROPS

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE'S great diversity accounts for much of this state's economic richness. But diversity is not without its penalties. Specialty crops often have more pest control problems than the country's major crops such as cotton, wheat and corn. Without pesticides, many specialty crops can't be produced economically or with the quality the markets demand.

The problem of developing pesticides for small-acreage specialty crops has long been burdensome to manufacturers, and has posed a constant threat (of unavailability) to growers. Manufacturers must now live with a new set of ground rules: an amendment to the law, requiring Federal registration for *all* pesticides whether or not the state has permitted their use on specialty crops. Within four years from October 22, 1974, when the new law takes effect, many pesticides used on specialty crops will not be legally available to meet pest control needs.

The impact of the law is not yet fully realized. Registration of pesticides will require extensive analyses, detailed toxicological studies, and data on environmental impacts—in addition to the presently required information for each specialty crop use.

The many such crops in California include: seeds for alfalfa, clover, and many vegetables; oilseeds including safflower, sesame, and sunflower; olives; vegetables such as carrots, asparagus, and spinach; ornamentals, flowers, and nursery stock; condiments and spices from plants such as anise, garlic, sage, and celery seed. Pesticide manufacturers will find it unprofitable to develop most of the needed information because of the limited market represented by each specialty crop.

This is where the Agricultural Experiment Station in California, and in other states, must enter the picture. Foreseeing

the problems of pest control in crops where total use of any pesticide would be small, the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1964 established Interregional Project Number 4 (IR-4). USDA, through IR-4, acts as a clearing house for information on pesticide use in specialty crops.

California has had a major role in the organization and operation of the Interregional Project. Work under IR-4 has already provided California growers with pesticide registrations for use on some specialty crops. But under the amended law, it will be virtually impossible to meet the registration requirements for all uses of all pesticides by the effective date of the legislation.

We recognize the urgency. More than 20 specialty crop pesticide registrations have been put on our top priority list. Registrations of more than 100 others are of only slightly less urgency.

We will need the helping hands and financial support of all concerned. The California Department of Food and Agriculture, the USDA, the EPA, and the University are working together with the industry to develop procedures for rapid but satisfactory evaluation of pest controls for these crops—many of which are grown commercially in no other state.

We will need the support and understanding of California's agriculture as well as the general public if we are going to accomplish what needs doing.

CORRECTION! What a difference a letter makes! In last month's editorial in the final paragraph the following statement appeared: "The nature of the problems usually present quick solutions. . .". It was my intention to say that ". . . usually prevent quick solutions. . .".