



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Conventional Reduced Risk Pesticide (CRRP) Program to determine whether it was meeting its goal of reducing risks to human health and the environment by encouraging the development, registration and use of pesticide products that are lower risk.

Pesticides are widely used in agricultural, commercial and household settings. Once released into the environment, pesticides have the potential to pollute rivers, groundwater, air, soil, wildlife and food. The EPA developed the CRRP Program to quickly register reduced risk alternatives to those currently on the market. Reduced risk pesticides are designed to be less harmful to humans, birds, fish and/or plants; have lower potential for groundwater contamination; and require lower application rates.

This report addresses the following EPA goal or cross-agency strategy:

- *Ensuring the safety of chemicals and preventing pollution.*

For further information, contact our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2014/20140724-14-P-0322.pdf

Impact of EPA's Conventional Reduced Risk Pesticide Program Is Declining

What We Found

The impact of the CRRP Program has declined over the last 10 years. The CRRP Program is registering fewer reduced-risk pesticides compared to the number registered prior to the 2004 implementation of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA). In our opinion, PRIA is a factor in declining CRRP impact because it increased the cost to register reduced risk pesticides and decreased the time-to-market savings that reduced risk pesticides previously had over conventional pesticides. The EPA does not have the statutory authority to provide fee-reduction incentives for companies continuing to develop and register reduced risk pesticides.

The number of newly registered reduced risk pesticides may continue to decline unless the EPA can reduce barriers to participation.

Implementing steps to remove participation obstacles can increase participation and the impacts of the CRRP Program. Moreover, improving the measurement of the program's outcomes can more accurately capture the impacts of the CRRP Program. The program's existing performance measure focuses on the use of reduced risk pesticides in agriculture. The measure does not capture the complete population of CRRP products in the marketplace. For example, CRRP products used in non-agricultural markets—such as residences or around food products—are not captured, and the EPA has not developed ways to cost effectively collect non-agricultural use data.

Noteworthy Achievements

The CRRP Program has succeeded in bringing reduced risk pesticides to market since 1994. More than 727 reduced risk pesticide uses have been approved and reduced risk pesticides account for approximately 22 percent of farm acres treated in the United States each year. Also, the CRRP Program has successfully partnered with the Interregional Research Project No. 4 to make reduced risk pesticides widely available to a diverse population of growers.

Recommendations and Agency Response

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention seek authority from Congress to reduce PRIA application fees for reduced risk pesticides to increase participation, and develop measures that better capture the impact of the entire CRRP Program. The EPA agreed with our recommendations and has proposed acceptable corrective actions. All recommendations are resolved.