COMMON NAMES FOR PESTICIDES

B. B. WATTS

Registrar, Agricultural Chemicals Board, Wellington

Summary

The need for common names for pesticides is briefly outlined, and procedures for the establishment of common names in New Zealand are detailed. Some principles which are used when common names are suggested are listed.

WHY ARE COMMON NAMES NECESSARY?

DURING the past thirty years or so, many new chemicals have become available for use as pesticides and so the need for convenient and internationally accepted common names for these chemicals has increased. Occasionally more than one short common name has been used for the same compound and confusion has resulted. Common names are required for use in scientific literature, in legislation, and in national and international trade. Because the trade in pesticides and the circulation of scientific literature dealing with them is worldwide, international agreement on common names is most desirable.

WHO PUBLISHES COMMON NAMES?

Various standards organizations publish lists of common names of pesticides accepted by their organizations. In New Zealand such lists are published by the Agricultural Chemicals Board under the title of "Nomenclature of Agricultural Chemicals". The Board has a Standards Committee, which includes representatives of the Standards Association of New Zealand (SANZ) and considers proposals submitted by the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Proposals from organizations other than BSI or ISO are not considered by the Board and hence some common names used only by say, American authorities, for example, butylate, and which have not been proposed by BSI or ISO, will not be found listed in the Board's publication "Nomenclature of Agricultural Chemicals".

An ISO Technical Committee has been in operation since 1955; this committee deals with the international agreement on and acceptance of common names with the BSI acting as secretariat. The Standards Association of New Zealand, on receipt of proposals for common names from ISO or BSI, advises the Board of these and also requests protection of these names from the Commissioner of Trade Marks. Protection is given provided the proposed names are not subject to conflict with any registered trade marks. The proposed names are either tentatively accepted or rejected by the Board on the recommendation of the Standards Committee. As it is felt desirable to encourage the use of common names at an early stage, the Board's policy is to accept them tentatively at an early stage and as a result, in some cases, the originally proposed common name may change as it proceeds through the system — *e.g.*, methachlor to alachlor.

A name proceeds through three stages at ISO and BSI — proposed, draft and accepted. Member countries in the case of ISO or contact points in the case of BSI have the opportunity to comment both at the proposed and the draft stages before the names are finally accepted by the appropriate authority.

SOME PRINCIPLES USED IN SELECTING COMMON NAMES

- (1) No compound should be given a common name if its chemical name is reasonably short and distinctive — *e.g.*, metaldehyde.
- (2) The country of origin should be given the first opportunity to suggest a name.
- (3) Common names should:
 - (a) Be identical in all languages subject to necessary variation in spelling, inflection, etc.
 - (b) Be as short as is practicable.
 - (c) Be distinctive in sound and spelling.
 - (d) If practicable, include one or more syllables that serve as reminders of the scientific chemical name.

In a short name it is clearly impracticable to indicate the full chemical structure but, by incorporating the names of important groups (even in shortened forms), it becomes possible to use the name so formed as an *aide-memoire* to chemical structure:

e.g., chlorfenvinphos: 2-chlor-1-(2,4-dichlorophenyl) vinyl diethyl phosphate.

N.B. Common names for organophosphorus compounds should preferably include the syllable "phos".

- (4) Common names for salts or esters should normally be given to the parent acid or base. The nature of a salt or ester should be indicated by a suffix.
- (5) Common names should:
 - (a) Not be liable to confusion with commercial trade marks or common names already in use, with names used in international chemical nomenclature, or with names of foods, pharmaceutical products, etc.
 - (b) Not be difficult to pronounce or remember.
 - (c) Not be composed only of initials and/or numbers.
 - (d) Not contain syllables of misleading chemical significance.
- (6) A proprietary name should not be considered as a common name unless the manufacturer has formally agreed:
 - (a) Not to use it as a trade mark in any country; and
 - (b) To permit its use in all countries as a common name by giving up rights to or by any other means conforming to national trade marks legislation.
- (7) Common names should not be included in national standards until it is known that conflict with internationally registered trade marks is unlikely and that the name is likely to be accepted by a majority of members of the ISO Technical Committee concerned.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to coin suitable common names to include one or more syllables to indicate specific chemical groups with-

out the proposed common name becoming too complicated. The Agricultural Chemicals Board supports the principle that for common names to be useful they should be short and easily pronounceable and need not necessarily have any relation to the chemistry of the product, if, by including relevant syllables, the common names become too long and difficult to pronounce. The principle of including one or more syllables to serve as reminders of the scientific chemical name may in the writer's opinion be subject to amendment at a future date.

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British Standards Institution "Recommended Common Names for Pesticides", B.S. 1831: 1969.