

Some Tips on THE MILLER BILL

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The Miller Bill is the Pesticide Chemicals Residue Amendment to Public Law No. 518. This is an amendment to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act of 1938. The new amendment is designed to permit the effective use of sprays and dusts in the production of food without hazard to the consumer.

Mr. Winton B. Rankin, assistant to the Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, said on December 7, 1955:

"There is one element of misunderstanding about the new law that all of us can help clear up. Many people are under the impression that this new law sets up some new requirement about pesticides in foods and that it will render crops in interstate commerce more likely to be seized by the Federal Government. As a matter of fact, the new law does not change the basic requirement of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that foods in interstate commerce shall be free of dangerous quantities of spray residues. This requirement has been a part of the basic statute since it was enacted in 1938. What the new law does is to set up a more convenient method of determining what is a safe residue and announcing this safe level or tolerance level to the public."

The Miller Bill in part became effective July 31, 1955. Since there was not enough data on residues of all pesticide chemicals, it was impossible to set tolerances on all pesticides on the above date. In the last eight months many of the pesticides have been given a green light. Tolerances for most crops and how many days before harvest specified pesticides may be used without a harmful residue being left have been established.

What materials does the term pesticide chemical cover? It includes insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and rodenticides; sprays and dusts that control insects, weeds, plant diseases and other farm pests. It does not include defoliants, desiccants, and other agricultural chemicals that are not used for control of pests.

The law affects the use of sprays and dusts on all raw agricultural commodities that are produced on the farm.

What is a pesticide chemical residue? It is the amount of the pesticide chemical remaining in or on the crop when it is harvested. What is a tolerance? It is the maximum amount of pesticide chemical residue which can legally remain on the crop after harvest. For example, a tolerance of seven parts per million means that not more than seven parts per million by weight of that chemical may legally remain in or on any food when it enters interstate commerce.

Some pesticide chemicals leave no residue and for that reason have been given no tolerance. Others are given a "zero" tolerance, which means that the product is subject to condemnation if any of its residue whatsoever is found at harvest time.

Mr. Rankin further stated: "The necessity for ordinary prudence in use of pesticides should not alarm the consuming public or the growers. There are three cardinal principles which we should remember, and they are: Where a tolerance is issued by the Federal Government, it means:

1. That residues up to the tolerance level are safe; this has been established by adequate experimental studies on animals.
2. That the pesticide can be employed usefully in agriculture without leaving excessive residues; this has been established by the certificate of usefulness furnished to the Food and Drug Ad-

ministration by the Department of Agriculture.

3. That when the pesticide is used according to proper directions, it will leave residues that are within the permitted level; we will not issue a tolerance unless there is evidence that it can be met."

The Pure Food representatives in Arizona will take some samples in the fields or sheds and others may be taken at their destination. They work very closely with the University of Arizona and other state and federal agricultural agencies. They do not go around snooping but are open in their work. They are not equipped with manpower to answer every whim nor are their laboratories equipped to run analyses for everyone desiring such.

In Arizona our recommendations have always conformed with federal registrations since many of our products go into interstate commerce. As long as we make correct recommendations and growers follow directions, there will be no trouble.

This is a short resume of the Miller Bill. It is not something to put fear into the public or the farmer. It is a common sense law that gives protection to all. There will be no hardships or troubles if directions are followed. If you do not understand the label directions in the Agricultural Extension Service publications, be sure to contact your local County Agricultural Agent or his assistants. They can always give or secure the desired information.

Learn to read the labels.

Learn to follow written directions.

Use only recommended pesticides listed for the crop you dust or spray.

Growers should never conduct experimental tests with materials which are not cleared for use in their state. The basic rule is simply: Use sprays or dusts according to label directions, on the crops specified, in the amounts specified, and at the times specified.

CORRECTION STATEMENT—LIMITATION ON SYSTOX

An ambiguous statement appeared in the article on the spotted alfalfa aphid on page 11 of the January, February, March 1956 issue of *Progressive Agriculture*. In the table of suggested control measures for alfalfa grown for hay (Section 2) are the words "Same as above." This incorrectly implies that demeton (Systox) is suggested for use on alfalfa grown for hay. Demeton (Systox) is registered only for use on seed alfalfa crops and should not be used on hay crops. Only formulations of malathion or parathion should be used on alfalfa hay crops, following the precautions suggested. A 4% malathion dust will be available in 1956 which may be substituted for the 5% dust suggested in the article. (Editor)