

MCFA

Minor Crop Farmer Alliance

TO: MCFA members
FROM: Marcy Martin, MCFA Secretary
SUBJECT: MCFA Update: Science vs. Politics; Next Meeting Dec. 17
DATE: November 2019

"We are seeing highly politicized decision making in the EU... We are concerned this will detrimentally impact minor crop producers." – Deputy Assistant USTR for Ag Affairs Julia Doherty

The U.S. specialty crop community's access to effective crop-protection tools is facing serious threats, both here and abroad with our trading partners. Thank you for supporting MCFA's important work. Following is an update from the well-attended Sept. 19 meeting of the MCFA Technical Committee.

And **make plans to attend the Technical Committee's next meeting on Dec. 17** in Washington, D.C.; this gathering will be followed by an afternoon meeting of the new [EU MRL coalition](#). RSVP to co-chairs [Mike Aerts](#) or [Gabriele Ludwig](#).

- **USTR moves to counter the EU's non-science pesticide policies:** Deputy Assistant USTR for Ag Affairs [Julia Doherty](#) reported that the USTR's office is working through several channels to seek to address the EU's non-science-based plans to cancel uses and trade-impacting MRLs for key pesticides. USTR has **elevated the issue to the WTO Council for Trade in Goods**, and has **requested that the U.S. International Trade Commission** investigate and report on the global economic impact of national MRL policies.
For alerts regarding EU review actions, visit the new USDA FAS [early alert site](#). MCFA Technical Committee co-chair [Gabriele Ludwig](#) and others are spearheading an **informal ag coalition on EU MRLs** that also includes the row crop industry. Contact Gabriele to join in.
Unfortunately, it appears that the EU does not mind being isolated from the international community. Doherty noted that **it will be important to recast the EU's narrative** to stress the importance of sustainability – for family farms, and for the world's workers.
- **Distinguished guests:** MCFA meetings are a rare chance for the specialty crop community to be heard by federal officials. In addition to Doherty, guests listening in on our Technical Committee's discussion were [Office of Pesticide Management Policy](#) Director [Sheryl Kunickis](#), EPA Office of Public Engagement and Environmental Education Associate Administrator [Elizabeth "Tate" Bennett](#), and members of their staffs.
- **EPA decisions suggest a return to science:** A considerable portion of the Technical Committee's meeting was devoted to discussing the status of ongoing safety reviews and other actions regarding key crop-protection chemicals:
 - **Chlorpyrifos:** While EPA's [refusal on July 18](#) to ban chlorpyrifos was impressively science-based, it was immediately challenged in court. Petitioners seeking the ban failed "to provide evidence ... that is sufficiently valid, complete and reliable ... to meet the burden ... for revocation," EPA wrote in its decision. Nonetheless, 9 states' attorneys general filed suit against the agency; the EU continues to [move](#) to cancel use of chlorpyrifos in January 2020.
 - **Pyrethroids:** EPA [announced plans](#) in August to reduce the FQPA safety factor imposed on pyrethroids from 3x to 1x, after reviewing all available science. MCFA plans to submit supportive comments when that docket opens; meeting attendees noted this approach could also apply to the ongoing review of **organophosphates**.

- **Glyphosate:** While EPA is expected to publish an interim decision by the end of the year supporting the safe use of glyphosate when used as directed, governments around the world plan to review or have already outright banned its use.
- **ESA workshop planning proceeds:** As part of MCFA's work to help address the broken Endangered Species Act (ESA) pesticide review process, Technical Committee co-chair Mike Aerts reported on MCFA plans to host a workshop in spring 2020 for regulators and other stakeholders. The workshop will explore opportunities to **use real-world data from growers to refine ESA risk assessments** and resulting mitigation processes. MCFA has also [provided numerous comments](#) to regulators regarding ESA, and is joining with allies to urge the agencies to form a working group to guide their ESA pesticide evaluations as mandated by the farm bill.
We need your donation to make this important workshop happen; contact [Phil Korson](#).
- **IR-4 Project to relocate to North Carolina:** Unable to resolve overhead charges with Rutgers University, the [IR-4 Project](#) will relocate to North Carolina State University over the course of the next two years. While not all staff plan to make the move to North Carolina, IR-4 is exploring how to keep some of that expertise after the transition.

You can help MCFA by:

- **Renewing or increasing your membership** today.
- **Responding to MCFA calls for action**, and spreading the word to your members/colleagues.
- **Volunteering!** Share your expertise and ensure that your crop is represented.

[Contact](#) any of our volunteer leaders to learn how. To learn more, visit us [online](#).