

EPA Considers Removal of 72 Chemicals from Pesticide Products

On October 23, 2014, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to remove [72 chemicals](#) from its list of substances approved for use as inert ingredients in pesticide products. The EPA proposed these changes as a response to the request from the Center for Environmental Health, Beyond Pesticides, and Physicians for Social Responsibility to mandate that companies disclose the 371 ingredients found in pesticide products.

Inert ingredients, defined under federal law, are substances other than an "active" ingredients that play key roles in the effectiveness of pesticide products and are intentionally included in a pesticide product. Inert ingredients, such as emulsifiers or solvents, can assist a pesticide by allowing it to penetrate a plants outer surface as well as extending the shelf life of a pesticide. "Active" ingredients prevent, destroy, repel pests and act as plant regulators. It is important to note that the term "inert" does not imply that the chemical is nontoxic.

According to the Western Farm Press, the 72 inert chemicals that EPA is proposing to remove are not currently used in current pesticides on the market.

The EPA decided to take a different route aimed at reducing the amount of hazardous chemicals in pesticides. In the EPA's press release announcing the proposal, Jim Jones of the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention said, "we are taking action to ensure that these ingredients are not added to any pesticide products unless they have been fully vetted by EPA." Mr. Jones also stated, "this is the first major step in our strategy to reduce risks from pesticides containing potentially hazardous inert ingredients."

According to federal law, pesticide products may contain more than one inert ingredient, but does not require that these ingredients be identified by name or percentage on the label. The EPA must approve all inert ingredients in pesticide products, including those in an inert mixture. If the inert ingredients are going to be used on food, a tolerance or tolerance exemption is required.

The EPA is accepting public comment on the [proposed rule](#) until November 21, 2014.