

AMS NEWS RELEASE

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USDA PESTICIDE DATA PROGRAM TO BEGIN WATER MONITORING SURVEY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27, 2001--In March 2001, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide Data Program (PDP) will begin a water monitoring survey, designed to produce statistically reliable human consumption data on pesticides in drinking water. To date, PDP activities have focused on producing pesticide residue data in food commodities. This pilot survey will introduce drinking water analyses to the program.

Pesticide residue data for drinking water are necessary to support the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1996. The Agricultural Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2001 allocated funding for a limited drinking water survey designed to provide these additional data. PDP will conduct the initial water survey in community water systems in California and New York. The United States Geological Survey has been working collaboratively with PDP and will be conducting sample collection for the survey. Sample analyses will be performed by the New York and California PDP laboratories.

The data generated by PDP are intended to be used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to perform aggregate risk assessments that are used to make regulatory decisions about pesticides. According to EPA, data available through various monitoring programs do not include all pesticides currently under FQPA evaluation. Adequate monitoring data on pesticides residues in drinking water can be used to refine the risk assessments and to validate or refine statistical models. These data will help ensure that problems identified in the risk assessments are valid, and that any mitigation actions taken are necessary for the protection of public health and the environment.

Additional information regarding PDP can be obtained by contacting Martha Lamont, Pesticide Data Branch, Science and Technology, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, 8700 Centreville Road, Suite 200, Manassas, VA 20110; phone (703) 330-2300, fax (703) 369-0678.