

AP EXCLUSIVE

Pesticide maker asks administration to kill risk study

By MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press



AP Photo/Dave Martin, File

In this photo taken Aug. 4, 2009 file photo, a crop dusting plane sprays a field of crops just outside Headland, Ala.

WASHINGTON — Dow Chemical is pushing a Trump administration open to scrapping regulations to ignore the findings of federal scientists who point to a family of widely used pesticides as harmful to about 1,800 critically threatened or endangered species.

Lawyers representing Dow, whose CEO is a close adviser to Trump, and two other manufacturers of organophosphates sent letters last week to the heads of three of Trump's Cabinet agencies. The companies asked them "to set aside" the results of government studies the companies contend are fundamentally flawed.

Dow Chemical wrote a \$1 million check to help underwrite Trump's inaugural festivities, and its chairman and CEO, Andrew Liveris, heads a White House manufacturing working group.

The industry's request comes after EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced last month he was reversing an Obama-era effort to bar the use of Dow's chlorpyrifos pesticide on food after recent peer-reviewed studies found that even tiny levels of exposure could hinder the development of children's brains.

in legal disputes with the interests of executives and corporations who supported his state campaigns. He filed more than a dozen lawsuits seeking to overturn some of the same regulations he is now charged with enforcing.

Pruitt declined to answer questions from reporters Wednesday as he toured a polluted Superfund site in Indiana. A spokesman for the agency later told AP that Pruitt won't "prejudge" any potential rule-making decisions as "we are trying to restore regulatory sanity to EPA's work."

The letters to Cabinet heads, dated April 13, were obtained by The Associated Press. As with the recent human studies of chlorpyrifos, Dow hired its own scientists to produce a lengthy rebuttal to the government studies.

lators at the three federal agencies, which share responsibilities for enforcing the Endangered Species Act, are close to issuing findings expected to result in new limits on how and where the highly toxic pesticides can be used.

"We have had no meetings with Dow on this topic and we are reviewing petitions as they come in, giving careful consideration to sound science and good policymaking," said J.P. Freire, EPA's associate administrator for public affairs. "The administrator is committed to listening to stakeholders affected by EPA's regulations, while also reviewing past decisions."

The office of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who oversees the Natural Marine Fisheries Service, did not respond to emailed

questions. A spokeswoman for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who oversees the Fish and Wildlife Service, referred questions back to EPA.

The EPA's recent biological evaluation of chlorpyrifos found the pesticide is "likely to adversely affect" 1,778 of the 1,835 animals and plants accessed as part of its study, including critically endangered or threatened species of frogs, fish, birds and mammals. Similar results were shown for malathion and diazinon.

In a statement, the Dow subsidiary that sells chlorpyrifos said its lawyers asked for the EPA's biological assessment to be withdrawn because its "scientific basis was not reliable."

"Dow AgroSciences is committed to the production and marketing of products

that will help American farmers feed the world, and do so with full respect for human health and the environment, including endangered and threatened species," the statement said. "These letters, and the detailed scientific analyses that support them, demonstrate that commitment."

FMC Corp., which sells malathion, said the withdrawal of the EPA studies would allow the necessary time for the "best available" scientific data to be compiled.

"Malathion is a critical tool in protecting agriculture from damaging pests," the company said.

Diazinon maker Makhteshim Agan of North America Inc., which does business under the name Adama, did not respond to emails seeking comment.

that will help American farmers feed the world, and do so with full respect for human health and the environment, including endangered and threatened species," the statement said. "These letters, and the detailed scientific analyses that support them, demonstrate that commitment."

FMC Corp., which sells malathion, said the withdrawal of the EPA studies would allow the necessary time for the "best available" scientific data to be compiled.

"Malathion is a critical tool in protecting agriculture from damaging pests," the company said.

Diazinon maker Makhteshim Agan of North America Inc., which does business under the name Adama, did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Friday Morning April 21, 2017

Table with 12 columns (Station, Time, Program) for Friday Morning. Includes FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, and KATU channels.

AFTERNOON

Table with 12 columns (Station, Time, Program) for Afternoon. Includes FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, and PBS channels.

EVENING

Table with 12 columns (Station, Time, Program) for Evening. Includes FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, and PBS channels.

PARENTS TALK BACK Help with talking to your kids about drinking



AISHA SULTAN Parents Talk Back

Maryellen Pado started talking to her son when he was in elementary school about the responsibilities and risks involved with drinking alcohol. She had conversations with her children periodically over the years, so they would be prepared to make good decisions as adults.

And yet, the call still came during his senior year of high school: The cops had raided a party at a friend's house, where he had been drinking.

"I was glad he told us the truth," Pado said. "But I wasn't sure what to say to him or to the parent who hosted the party." That parent had provided alcohol to the underage drinkers.

Pado, who lives in the St. Louis area and works for Anheuser-Busch, turned to M.J. Corcoran, the parent coach who designed the company's "Family Talk about Drinking" program. Corcoran says these conversations need to begin when children are young and evolve as they grow up.

When kids are younger, the focus should be on explaining clear boundaries and rules. When they move into tween and early teen years, parents should start asking more open-ended questions, such as: If you go to a party, and people are drinking there, what will you do? Ask kids how they might handle certain specific scenarios and situations.

As children get into later teen years and have more independence, the conversations should still include information about where a teen will be, what the transportation will be and who else will be there.

Parents should share ways in which they can support a child's decisions. For instance, come up with a word or emoji that can be texted if a teen find himself in an uncomfortable or unsafe situation and needs to be picked up. He or she may not be able to offer details in a phone or text conversation in front of friends. But the emoji could trigger a call back from a parent, who then says they are coming to pick up the child. This could help a teenager save face, and possibly, save a life.

Corcoran also says that parents need to sit down with each other and make sure they are on the same page before talking to their child. If one parent offers firm rules, but the other softens that stance later, it give a child mixed messages.

"Be very clear about what your beliefs are," Corcoran said. "That will come through."

And avoid a lecture at all costs.

"That won't work," she said. "That just shuts kids down."

In Pado's situation with her son, who is now a college student, Corcoran suggested having him research how alcohol affects a teen's mind and body, and report back to his mom. Corcoran also recommended backing off a conversation with the adult who had provided the alcohol.

Pado told her son that even though he broke the rules in this instance, the rules still applied. They don't allow underage drinking and insist upon following the law.

Pado had forbidden both her son and daughter from attending parties where alcohol was served when they were in high school. By their junior year, they informed her this would restrict them from attending any parties at all.

"You are saying 'don't go to parties,'" her son told her. She appreciated their openness and talked to them about staying away from alcohol and watching out for the safety of their friends. Her biggest fear was of them getting into a car accident.

"Remember, if you make a mistake, don't make a bigger mistake after it," she said. Before her son left for college, she talked to him about the different types of alcohol and how it's impossible to know the alcohol content when people are mixing drinks at a party.

"You can't just put your head in the sand and keep them locked in the house," she said.

Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.

Table with 12 columns (Station, Time, Program) for Night Owl. Includes FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, and PBS channels.

Table with 12 columns (Station, Time, Program) for Night Owl. Includes FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, and PBS channels.