



November 26, 2019

Subject: Milton-Freewater, Pesticide Use Concern, Aerial Rodenticide Application, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Use Follow-up (AUF) # 200194 – Wildhorse Helicopter Inc.

The following information is being provided on behalf of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), and the Pesticide Analytical and Response Center (PARC).

**Incident History:**

On Nov. 7, 2019, Wildhorse Helicopters Inc., a Commercial Pesticide Operator, applied a rodenticide bait product to 811 acres of apple orchards northwest of Milton-Freewater. The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office responded to reports from concerned citizens and referred parties to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). On Nov. 8, 2019, an ODA Pesticide Investigator stationed in the Hermiston Field Office received a concern from one citizen, who reported that the rodenticide was applied to private property during the aerial application. The rodenticide was collected and identified as Motomco, ZP AG Pellets, EPA Registration No. 12455-17-3240 (containing the active ingredient zinc phosphide).

Over the following weekend, other citizens expressed concerns about the rodenticide application, and reported the death of several chickens and two turkeys, as well as the potential impact to four dogs. Two chickens were collected by a local veterinarian and sent to the Washington State University, Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory-Avian Health & Food Safety Laboratory in Puyallup, Washington, for necropsy and analysis. A third chicken was collected by an ODA investigator and also will be sent to the laboratory. No additional reports of impacts to animals have been reported to ODA.

The Pesticide Analytical and Response Center (PARC), a multi-agency board that coordinates pesticide-related incidents and provide resources and information to agencies and parties, has been assisting with incident coordination and communication. In addition, ODA's Citizen Advocate, Christina Higby, has been in communication with citizens who expressed concerns about the rodenticide application. Higby will serve as the Point of Contact (POC) for information about the pesticide product applied and the investigative process. Contact her at (503) 986-5105. Information about the pesticide product applied and the product label may be found at the following sites:

[http://oda.state.or.us/pest\\_labels/ppr/labels/71701/85892/34944/Product-Label/26779.pdf](http://oda.state.or.us/pest_labels/ppr/labels/71701/85892/34944/Product-Label/26779.pdf) or <http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/znpngen.html>

**Updated Information:**

The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory-Avian Health & Food Safety Laboratory has completed the necropsy of the submitted chickens and is awaiting

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results before releasing final reports. The ODA Laboratory Services Program has completed the analysis of the pellets obtained from three private properties, and the results confirm the active ingredient zinc phosphide.

Higby, ODA's Citizen Advocate, has provided information to nine citizens who contacted ODA with questions or concerns about the incident. No new reports of concerns or impacts to animal health have been made. ODA staff continue to investigate the incident and explore any violations of the Pesticide Control Law (ORS 634).

ODA's Natural Resources Program GIS Coordinator has been mapping the orchard locations where the pesticide product was applied as well as the addresses of the private properties to better understand the flight path and properties affected. ODA continues to work with the Wildhorse Helicopter Inc. to obtain specific flight pattern information that also will be incorporated into the mapping.

Based upon a review of existing data, the active ingredient zinc phosphide appears to be non-persistent under most environmental conditions and appears to have a low potential for ground water or surface water contamination. As previously identified, rain and moisture in the area following the application aided in the decomposition of the pesticide product.

PARC, in collaboration with the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC), serves as a source for objective, science-based pesticide information. For questions about the active ingredient zinc phosphide or other pesticides, call (800) 858-7378 or visit <http://npic.orst.edu>.

ODA will continue to provide periodic updates of the status of the investigation to interested parties. Information about the ODA Pesticides Program may be found at the following web page: <https://oda.direct/AboutPesticides>.