

TITLE:

2001 Update on the Methyl Bromide Phase Out

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ABSTRACT:

Methyl bromide is used extensively on a global basis as a pesticide against nematodes, weeds, insects, fungi, bacteria, and rodents. As a soil fumigant, it is used in the production of strawberries, tomatoes, nursery crops, as well as other agriculture commodities. Grain, fresh fruit, forestry products, and other materials are fumigated with Methyl Bromide to control pest infestations during transport and storage. Structures are also treated with this chemical to control wood destroying insects and rodents.

However, methyl bromide has been identified as a significant ozone depleting substance, resulting in regulatory actions being taken by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and by the United Nations Environment Program (Montreal Protocol). Since this material will be unavailable soon, it is critical to identify and implement efficacious and viable alternatives in the near-term. The current phase out schedule includes a 50% reduction in 2001, a 70% reduction in 2003, and a 100% reduction in 2005. Preshipment and quarantine uses are exempt from the phase out, and critical agricultural uses will be allocated after 2005.

EPA is working with USDA and interested stakeholders in evaluating alternatives so as to focus scarce resources on those areas that will best assist growers move to alternatives in the short-term. To this end, EPA and USDA are actively working to define where gaps exist in the range of available and viable alternatives. A critical step in this effort is to insure that the necessary label and registration changes take place for those chemical alternatives that can replace uses of methyl bromide.