SEVERE ENHANCED BIODEGRADATION OF METHAM SODIUM IN AUSTRALIA

Ben Warton and John N Matthiessen
CSIRO Entomology, Private Bag 5 PO, Wembley WA 6913, Australia
John.Matthiessen@csiro.au

Metham (metam) sodium (sodium *N*-methyldithiocarbamate) and 1,3-dichloropropene (1,3-D) have both long been known to be susceptible to enhanced microbial degradation, a phenomenon that does not functionally affect methyl bromide.

A particularly severe example of enhanced biodegradation of metham sodium that occurs in Australia is described. Related work (see Matthiessen and Warton, these proceedings), has recently determined the key factors that interact to greatly increase the risk of enhanced biodegradation.

Producers considering the use of metham sodium, 1,3-D or other labile pesticides as a substitute for methyl bromide need to be aware of the risk of inducing enhanced biodegradation through repeated applications to the same area of soil.

These are useful products, but being less forgiving than methyl bromide they require stewardship for sustainable, effective use.