

# Pesticide deadline is Oct. 21

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significantly higher. About 80 per cent are now eligible for certification.

Anyone who hasn't taken steps yet to become certified is urged to do so soon, lest he be sent home from the store without his chemicals the next time he wants to control insects or weeds.

There's still time to take the test, which leads to certification by the Department of Agriculture. Private applicators may take their tests at home. Commercial applicators receive a proctored examination and must pay at \$30 license fee, as well as post evidence that they are prepared for personal liability and property damage claims to as high as \$100,000 each.

Although the state and federal deadline for becoming a certified applicator of restricted chemicals is Oct. 21, no one is outside of that law unless he sells or makes use of restricted chemicals after that date without certification. In other words, if the farmer has no intention of using a product such as Paraquat until next Spring, he has until then to make sure he gets certified. Paraquat is one of 23 pesticides on restricted use, as ordered by the Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S. Government. Another 38 chemicals are up for comment on the matter. Pennsylvania identifies its restricted use chemicals with a skull and crossbones and the word DANGEROUS on the label.

Steps towards certification are easy, say officials who are involved with the program. The Extension Service of Penn State University has charge of educating the public on the matter, and will also provide testing materials. Along that line, meetings will be held on Oct. 13 and 27 at the Lan-

caster Farm and Home Center to offer commercial applicators the opportunity to take the test. Commercial pesticide applicators are those who do custom spraying or those who spray outside the realm of actual agricultural production. Examples are handlers and millers, golf course operators, and fumigators.

Dr. Jerry Florentine, pesticide operations coordinator with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, says his Department estimates that 20,000 to 25,000 people within the Commonwealth may find that private pesticide certification is for them. Some 13,000 have taken steps towards that end. The remainder are either working on it or have thus far ignored the program. Florentine emphasizes, however, that these figures are just guesses. Extension offices at Penn State can't be any more specific than that.

A telephone survey conducted by Lancaster Farming on Thursday evening

revealed that only about 30 per cent of potential private pesticide users have taken steps to become certified. Calls were made at random throughout southeastern and southcentral Pennsylvania.

Some of the reasons cited for not having taken steps towards certification as of yet included: "didn't get around to it ... don't know if I'm using anything which requires certification ... I don't know where to go to be certified ... I don't do any spraying, but have a custom applicator do it for us instead ... I'm not too familiar with the law ... I haven't had time to take the test ... there's no spraying to be done now anyway ... I didn't hear too much about it ... and I don't know if it's really necessary."

Certification is indeed necessary if an individual intends to use restricted chemicals after Oct. 21. Further information on how to go about getting certification can be found in latter portions of this article.

Reaction to the certification program is divided

about half favorable and half unfavorable, Lancaster Farming's survey determined. One farmer said: "This is just one more control that the government is stepping in on; it's a bother but I guess it has its good points too. They're trying to do good, but sometimes it destroys the private sector, I think." Another indicated he thought it was a "little foolish, farmers are educated enough to know what they're doing. This is just something more for them to have to bother with ... we have enough to do as it is. If these chemicals are so dangerous, they shouldn't be on the market in the first place. We

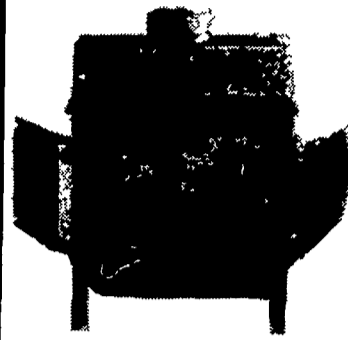
can read the label and follow instructions without the government telling us how." A third farmer said "I'm against more government regulations, but I'll live with this if I have to, although I rather wouldn't see it that way." Others questioned the necessity of the program.

Most, however, don't complain and are resigned to "just complying with the law."

The new pesticide law, which has been in the works for several years, also covers those individuals who

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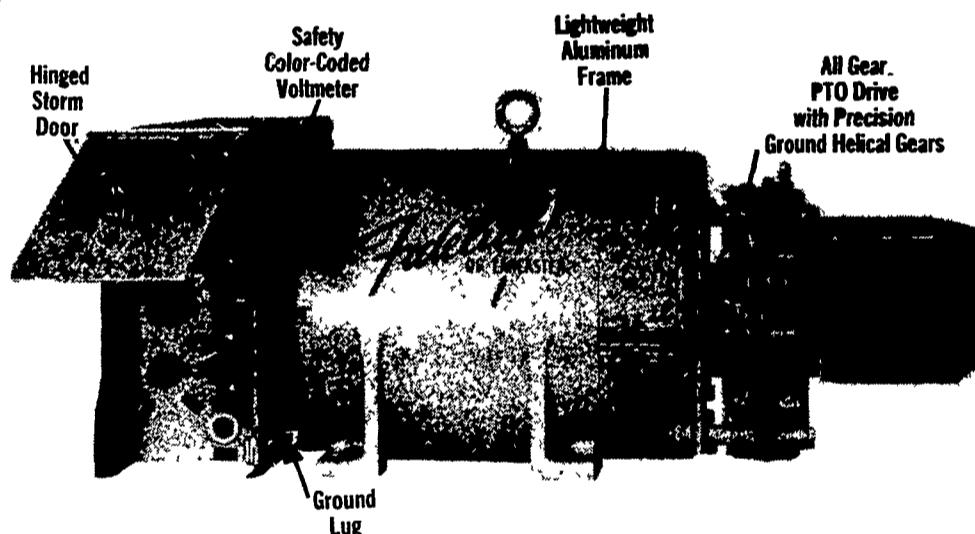
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