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Contact:

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April 6, 1978

Release #78-48

*Report
Phenoxy herbicides*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CDFA RELEASES REPORT
ON PHENOXY INVESTIGATION

SACRAMENTO--Director Richard E. Rominger of the California Department of Food and Agriculture said today his agency is taking no side in the phenoxy herbicide dispute in Mendocino County.

"We are in no way encouraging or promoting the use of phenoxy herbicides, or any other pesticide for that matter. We have an obligation under the law to see that pesticides are properly registered and safely used and when we suspect that local conditions may cause problems we investigate the matter and come up with recommendations."

"Regarding permits issued by agricultural commissioners for phenoxy herbicides, we have placed severely restricting conditions upon their issuance in order to ensure the public safety, and we have indicated to the commissioners the nature of these strict limits."

Rominger made the comment while issuing a 10-page summary of findings from hearings held in four Ukiah communities last summer. The hearings were held in response to many complaints received by the department regarding the aerial application of phenoxy herbicides during the previous spring.

Following the hearings, a 10-member team representing the general public, the timber industry, and the state, looked into the many allegations made at the hearings and was to advise the director on appropriate action to take in

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light of its investigative findings. The team held 10 meetings and conducted extensive field investigations, according to the report, and came up with a list of 47 recommendations.

Rominger said some of the recommendations have been acted upon, others require action by other agencies, others by the Legislature, and some have already been incorporated into department programs.

The director pointed out that his department has planned an extensive environmental and health monitoring program for selected places where county agricultural commissioners may issue permits for phenoxy herbicide spraying.

The report points out that a voluntary moratorium on the aerial spraying existed last year in some areas of the north coast and the 10-member team recommended its continuance. However, Rominger pointed out that there was a "lack of substantiation for any of the alleged health and environmental problems," and based on this, "the department will not call for a moratorium whether voluntary or mandatory."

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