

# Fumigation 2011

The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is currently undergoing a Re-registration Eligibility Decision (REDs) on fumigants, particularly the specific active ingredients methyl bromide, chloropicrin, metam sodium and Dazomet. What this entails for the users of these pesticides is that there will be new labels for these products by the end of 2010. These new labels will contain several changes affecting how fumigants are to be used in order to increase protections for agricultural workers and bystanders.

The labels will have two years of implementation of mitigation measures. In the first year (2010) the labels will address respiratory protection, tarp perforation and removal, reentry restrictions, Good Ag Practices (GAPs), Fumigant Management Plans (FMP), RUP Classification, and information provided by the Registrant.

In the year 2011 labels will address buffer zones, posting of fumigation applications, restrictions near “difficult to evacuate” sites, emergency preparedness and response, training, and community outreach.

## What Should You Expect

As expected with any label change, a grower’s management decisions will be significant for maintaining compliance with the label. Growers will have added responsibilities if they do choose to fumigate their soil in preparation of growing their crop. There may be alternatives to fumigation, such as using other pesticides, selecting better sites to grow the crop, and/or utilizing certain cultural practices.

Growers who decide to fumigate must prepare for the label changes prior to the fumigation applications. The grower can train and educate those employees that will be participating in the fumigation process, and ensure that their pesticide handlers/applicators are fit tested for the respirator that they will be using, in addition to undergoing a respiratory physical. This physical is necessary to determine and certify that the person has no health conditions that would prevent the use of a respirator. The employee will need training on the proper use and maintenance of a respirator. Fit testing and a respiratory physical are to be performed by an Industrial Hygienist.

Potential field sites should be scouted to determine if they will be suitable to fumigate legally. Fields located near residential areas, schools, daycares, and nursing homes will require additional safety measures. There are situations where the grower may be able to reduce the size of buffer zone and make the application process safer by altering the thickness of the tarps used, the soil moisture, and the size of the treated area. A Fumigation Management Plan (FMP) will need to be developed prior to the application. A generic plan may be provided by the Registrant but the plan is to be specific for each field. Aerial maps or other sources can be used to identify sites/issues of concerns prior to performing fumigation. The FMP will also require applicators to develop mitigation plans in case of an emergency. Air monitoring equipment will be required in order to monitor air concentrations of fumigants. There are several types of devices used for this; and you should become familiar with the monitoring equipment that is available, as well as be trained on its proper usage.

## Read and Follow Label Directions

The new labels are scheduled to be released on December 1, 2010. If you require assistance, contact your Local Cooperative Extension, NCDCA, or the registrant of the products you use.

NEW BYSTANDER RISK MITIGATION MEASURES (RMM) FOR SOIL FUMIGANTS Q&A