

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2

September 13, 2023 @9:32 am

USEPA – Region II

Regional Hearing Clerk

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In the Matter of

Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC,  
Respondent.

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND  
FINAL ORDER

Proceeding to Assess a Civil Penalty  
Under Section 14(a) of the Federal  
Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide  
Act, 7 U.S.C. § 136I(a)

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Docket No. FIFRA-02-2023-5061

**Consent Agreement**

1. This is an administrative action commenced and concluded under Section 14(a) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), 7 U.S.C. § 136I(a), and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3) of the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (CROP)* as codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 22. Pursuant to Section 22.13(b) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice, where the parties agree to settlement of one or more causes of action before the filing of an administrative complaint, a proceeding may be simultaneously commenced and concluded by the issuance of a Consent Agreement and Final Order pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18(b)(2) and (3).
2. The Complainant is the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 2.
3. Respondent is Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC, a Georgia corporation, located at 3104 Creekside Village Drive, Suite 507, Kennesaw, GA 30144.
4. The parties agree that settling this action without the filing of a Complaint or the adjudication of any issue of fact or law is in their interest and in the public interest.
5. Respondent consents to the assessment of the civil penalty specified in this Consent

Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) and to the terms of this CAFO.

**Jurisdiction and Waiver of Right to Hearing**

6. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations in this CAFO and neither admits nor denies the factual allegations in this CAFO.

7. Respondent waives its right to request a hearing as provided at 40 C.F.R. § 22.15(c), and any rights it may have to contest the allegations in this CAFO or to appeal this CAFO.

**Statutory and Regulatory Background**

8. Section 2(u)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(u)(1) defines a “pesticide” as “any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest.”

9. Section 2(gg) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(gg), defines the term “distribute or sell” to mean to distribute, sell, offer for sale, hold for distribution, hold for sale, hold for shipment, ship, deliver for shipment, release for shipment, or receive and (having so received) deliver or offer to deliver.

10. Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a, requires the registration of a pesticide in order that its distribution or sale be lawful.

11. The importation of pesticides into the United States is governed by Sections 17(c) and (e) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. §§ 136o(c) and 136o(e), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary of the Treasury in consultation with the Administrator of the EPA (the Administrator). These regulations are found at 19 C.F.R. Part 12.

12. Section 17(e) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136o(e), and 19 C.F.R § 12.1(b) provide that the regulations for the importation of pesticides and devices are joint regulations enforceable by the cooperating agencies.

13. Nineteen C.F.R. § 12.115 states in pertinent part that if the EPA so directs, a shipment of pesticides or devices will be detained by the port director pending an examination by

the Administrator to determine whether the shipment complies with the requirements of the Act.

14. Nineteen C.F.R. § 12.112 states, in pertinent part, that an importer desiring to import pesticides or devices into the United States shall submit to the Administrator a Notice of Arrival (“NOA”) of Pesticides or Devices (EPA Form 3540-1) prior to the arrival of the shipment to the United States. See also Section 17(c) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136o(c).

15. Nineteen C.F.R. § 12.111 states that all imported pesticides are required to be registered under the provisions of Section 3 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a, and under the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Administrator before being permitted entry into the United States. These regulations are found at 40 C.F.R. Parts 152 and 156.

16. Forty C.F.R. § 152.15(a)(1) states that, “a substance is considered to be intended for a pesticidal purpose and thus to be a pesticide requiring registration, if the person who distributes or sells the substance claims, states, or implies (by labeling or otherwise) that the substance (either by itself or in combination with any other substance) can or should be used as a pesticide.”

17. Section 2(s) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(s), defines a “person” as any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or any organized group of persons whether incorporated or not.

18. Section 2(p)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(p)(1), defines a “label” as written, printed, or graphic matter on, or attached to, the pesticide or device or any of its containers or wrappers.

19. Section 2(q) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(q), states that a pesticide is “misbranded” if *inter alia* the label does not bear the net weight or measure of the content.

20. Forty C.F.R. part 156 sets out additional labeling requirements for pesticides and further defines misbranding. Forty C.F.R. § 156.10(a)(1) states that every pesticide product shall bear a label containing information specified by FIFRA and the regulations in this part, including using conventional American units for net weight or measure of contents.

21. Section 3(c) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a(c) and 40 C.F.R. § 152.50(e), requires applicants seeking to register a pesticide to submit a draft label to EPA which EPA reviews for compliance, as per 40 C.F.R. § 152.108. Final printed labeling must be submitted and accepted prior to registration pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 156.10(a)(6).

22. Section 12(a)(1)(B) 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(B), states that it is unlawful for any person to distribute or sell any registered pesticide if any claims made for it as part of its distribution or sale substantially differ from any claims made for it as part of the statement required in connection with its registration under Section 3(c).

23. Section 12(a)(1)(E), 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(E), states that it is unlawful for any person to distribute or sell any pesticide which is misbranded.

24. Section 14(a)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a)(1), provides that any registrant, commercial applicator, wholesaler, dealer, retailer, or other distributor who violates any provision of FIFRA may be assessed a civil penalty by EPA of not more than \$5,000 for each offense. The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended through 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461 *note*, and its implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased this amount to \$20,528 for each offense for which a penalty is assessed after December 23, 2020.

#### **Factual Allegations and Alleged Violations**

25. Respondent is, and was at all times relevant to this Complaint, a corporation, and

therefore, a “person” as that term is defined at Section 2(s) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(s).

26. On August 24, 2021, EPA staff reviewed a NOA submitted on Respondent’s behalf for Entry No. EGT-0035581-5, a shipment of 1,632 fifty-pound pails containing BovicBrom, EPA Reg. No. 84699-3, imported into the Port of New York/Newark (Shipment). The labels provided with the NOA for the products in the Shipment did not appear to be the EPA-accepted label for EPA Reg. No. 84699-3 (label accepted June 6, 2016).

27. On August 31, 2021, EPA staff directed U.S. Customs officers at the Port of New York/Newark to detain the shipment and advised Respondent of the detention via a Notice of Detention and Hearing (“NOD”).

28. Upon review of information provided by Respondent in response to the NOD, EPA staff determined that the products in the shipment were pesticides, specifically BovicBrom, EPA Reg. No. 84699-3, and bore labels that displayed unapproved claims and directions and instructions not included in the EPA-accepted label for EPA Reg. No. 84699-3 including: the description of the product as an “algicide” in the directions for use; the phrase “Spa and hot tub water must be changed every 60 days” in the directions for use; and the phrase “After emptying and cleaning, it may be allowable to temporarily hold rinsate or other pesticide-related materials in the container” in the storage and disposal instructions.

29. The labels also only listed the net contents in kilograms rather than in conventional American units.

30. Respondent is an “importer” within the meaning of 19 C.F.R. § 12.112.

31. Respondent’s import of the products in the Shipment as labeled upon arrival, constitutes a distribution or sale of pesticides for which “claims differ” and of misbranded pesticides

and is an unlawful act as described by Sections 12(a)(1)(B) and (E) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(B) and (E).

32. Respondent's unlawful act, as alleged herein, is a violation of FIFRA for which a penalty may be independently assessed under Section 14(a)(1), 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a)(1).

**Civil Penalty**

31. Pursuant to Section 14(a)(4) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a)(4), Complainant determined that an appropriate civil penalty to settle this action is **\$6,750**. In determining the penalty amount, Complainant considered the appropriateness of the penalty to the size of Respondent's business, the effect on Respondent's ability to continue in business, and the gravity of the violation. Complainant also considered EPA's Enforcement Response Policy for the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, dated December 2009 (FIFRA ERP).

32. Respondent shall pay, either by certified check, electronically by Fedwire, or by online payment, a civil penalty in the amount of **six thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$6,750)**.

a. If Respondent chooses to make payment by certified check, then such check shall be made payable to the "Treasurer of the United States of America" and shall be mailed by one of the following two methods:

i. STANDARD DELIVERY

The check shall be mailed to:

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines & Penalties  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
P.O. Box 979078  
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

ii. SIGNED RECEIPT CONFIRMATION DELIVERY (Fedex, DHL, UPS, USPS, Certified, Registered, etc.)

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Government Lockbox 979078  
1005 Convention Plaza  
SL-MO-C2-GL  
St. Louis, MO 63101

The check shall be identified with a notation thereon listing the following: ***In the Matter of Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC*** and shall bear the Docket No. **FIFRA-02-2023-5061**.

b. If Respondent chooses to make payment electronically through Fedwire, Respondent shall provide the following information to its remitter bank (Federal Reserve Bank of New York) when payment is made:

- i. Amount of payment
- ii. SWIFT address: **FRNUS33, 33 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10045**
- iii. Account Code for Federal Reserve Bank of New York receiving payment: **68010727**
- iv. Federal Reserve Bank of New York ABA routing number: **021030004**
- v. Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read: **“D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency”**
- vi. Name of Respondent: **Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC**
- vii. Case Docket Number: **FIFRA-02-2023-5061**.

c. If Respondent chooses to make on-line payments, Respondent shall go to [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) and enter SFO 1.1 in the search field on the tool bar on the Home Page; select Continue under “EPA Miscellaneous Payments – Cincinnati Finance Center;” and open the form and complete the required fields. Once payment has been effected, Respondent shall email proof of payment to [Brannick.Michael@epa.gov](mailto:Brannick.Michael@epa.gov) and [wise.milton@epa.gov](mailto:wise.milton@epa.gov) with ***In the Matter of Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC, FIFRA-02-2023-5061*** as the subject line.

33. The civil penalty of \$6,750 must be received by EPA *on or before* thirty (30) calendar days from the date on which the Regional Judicial Officer signs the Final Order located at the end of this CAFO (the “due date”). Failure to pay the full amount of the penalty, according to the above provisions, will result in the referral of this matter to the United States Department of Justice and/or

the United States Department of Treasury for collection and/or other appropriate action. The validity, amount and appropriateness of the civil penalty are not reviewable in a collection action.

34. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717 and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, EPA is entitled to assess interest, administrative costs and late payment penalties on outstanding debts owed to the United States, including the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and a charge to cover costs of processing and handling delinquent claims.

a. Interest: Any unpaid portion of a civil penalty must bear interest at the rate established by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717(a)(1). Interest will therefore begin to accrue on any portion of the civil penalty not paid by the relevant Due Date(s) specified above. Forty C.F.R. § 13.11 (a)(1) provides for assessing the annual rate of interest that is equal to the rate of the current value of funds to the United States Treasury (*i.e.*, the Treasury tax and loan account rate) on installment payments.

b. Handling Charges: Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(1), a monthly handling charge of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) shall be assessed for each thirty (30) day calendar period, or any portion thereof, following the date the payment was to have been made, in which payment of the amount remains in arrears.

c. Late Penalty Charge: A late penalty charge of six percent (6%) per year will be assessed monthly on any portion of the civil penalty that remains delinquent more than ninety (90) calendar days. 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(c). The late payment penalty on any portion of the civil penalty that remains delinquent more than ninety days shall accrue from the first day payment is delinquent. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(d).

35. The civil penalty, including any payment(s) for interest or late payment and handling charges that come due, constitutes a penalty within the meaning of 26 U.S.C. § 162(f) and does not constitute a deductible expenditure for purposes of federal or state law.

**General Provisions**

36. Respondent certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, it is currently in compliance with FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. §§ 136-136y, and its implementing regulations.

37. Respondent explicitly and knowingly consents to the assessment of the civil penalty as set forth in this Consent Agreement and agrees to pay the penalty in accordance with the terms of this Consent Agreement. Full payment of the penalty shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations described in Paragraphs 28-31, above. Full payment of this penalty shall not in any case affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law.

38. This CAFO does not waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, or local laws, rules, or regulations, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on, or a determination of, any issue related to any federal, state or local permit. This CAFO does not waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of FIFRA and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

39. Compliance with the requirements and provisions of this CAFO shall not constitute a defense to any subsequent (*i.e.* following the filing of this document) action, suit or proceeding EPA (or the United States on behalf of EPA) may commence pursuant to any applicable federal statutory or regulatory provision for any violation(s) occurring after the date of the execution of the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement, or for any violation(s) of FIFRA statutory or regulatory requirements or prohibitions not alleged herein but that may have occurred prior to the date of the execution of the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

40. Respondent consents to the use of electronic signatures in this matter and to service upon it of a copy of this Consent Agreement and Final Order by an EPA employee other than the

Regional Hearing Clerk via electronic mail to the following addressee(s):

Joseph Gruchacz  
USA Manager  
Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC  
3104 Creekside Village Drive, Suite 507  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
Gruchacz@Canaxy.com

Delivery of the fully executed documents to the email addressee in this paragraph shall constitute Respondent's receipt and acceptance of the CAFO.

41. Any responses, documentation, and other communication submitted to EPA in connection with this Consent Agreement shall be sent by email to:

Michael Brannick  
Lead Paint & Pesticides Compliance Section  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 2  
2890 Woodbridge Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08837  
Brannick.Michael@epa.gov

Unless the above-named EPA contact is later advised otherwise by electronic mail, EPA shall address any written future correspondence (including any correspondence related to payment of the penalty in accordance with the provisions of this CAFO), to the addressee identified in the preceding paragraph.

42. Respondent has read the Consent Agreement, understands its terms, finds it to be reasonable, and consents to its issuance and its terms. Respondent agrees that this CAFO constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and all terms of settlement are set forth herein.

43. The terms of this CAFO bind Respondent, its successors, and assigns. Each person signing this agreement certifies that he or she has the authority to sign for the party whom he or she represents and to bind that party to its terms.

44. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorney fees in this action.

**RESPONDENT:**

BY: Joseph Gruchacz  Digitally signed by Joseph Gruchacz  
Date: 2023.09.08 17:35:20 -04'00'

(Signature)

NAME: Joseph Gruchacz

TITLE: USA Manager

COMPANY NAME: Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC

DATE: 9/8/23

**COMPLAINANT:**

*for* Anderson, Kate  
te

Digitally signed by  
Anderson, Kate  
Date: 2023.09.12  
10:43:00 -04'00'

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Dore F. LaPosta, Director  
Enforcement & Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL ORDER**

The Regional Judicial Officer of EPA, Region 2, concurs in the foregoing Consent Agreement in the case of **In the Matter of Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC, FIFRA-02-2023-5061**. Said Consent Agreement, having been duly accepted and entered into by the parties, is hereby ratified and incorporated into this Final Order, which is hereby issued and shall take effect when filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk of EPA, Region 2. 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b). This Final Order is being entered pursuant to the authority of 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(3). The effective date of this Order shall be the date of electronic filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2, New York, NY.

**HELEN  
FERRARA**

Digitally signed by HELEN  
FERRARA  
Date: 2023.09.13 08:58:26  
-04'00'

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**Helen Ferrara**

Regional Judicial Officer

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 2

290 Broadway, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, New York 10007-1866

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have this day caused to be sent electronically the foregoing fully executed Consent Agreement and Final Order, bearing the above-referenced docket number, to the respective addressees listed below:

By Electronic Mail:

Karen Maples  
Office of the Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 2  
290 Broadway, 17<sup>h</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007-1866  
[Maples.karen@epa.gov](mailto:Maples.karen@epa.gov)

Joseph Gruchacz  
USA Manager  
Longkou Keda Chemical USA, LLC  
3104 Creekside Village Drive, Suite 507  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
[Gruchacz@Canaxy.com](mailto:Gruchacz@Canaxy.com)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

LAUREN CHARNEY  Digitally signed by  
LAUREN CHARNEY  
Date: 2023.09.13  
09:24:19 -04'00'

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