

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

In re FIFRA Section 3(c)(2)(B) Notice of Intent)
to Suspend Dimethyl Tetrachloroterephthalate)
(DCPA) Technical Registration	
AMVAC Chemical Corporation;) Docket No. FIFRA-HQ-2022-0002
Grower-Shipper Association of Central)
California; Sunheaven Farms, LLC; J&D)
Produce; Ratto Bros., Inc.; and Huntington	
Farms,	
Petitioners.	

ORDER ON RESPONDENT'S MOTION TO AMEND HEARING AND SCHEDULING ORDER

On September 28, 2022, the Environmental Appeals Board ("EAB") issued a Decision and Remand Order requiring that a hearing be conducted in this matter to resolve certain factual and legal disputes. Thereafter, I issued a Hearing and Scheduling Order Following Remand (Oct. 3, 2022) ("Order") that provided time for the parties to engage in discovery, established various prehearing deadlines, and scheduled a hearing to begin February 14, 2023.

On October 7, 2022, the Agency moved to amend ("Motion") the Order, asking this Tribunal to remove "provisions on page 2 of the Order allowing for Additional Discovery, for the filing of motions for subpoenas, and for additional Prehearing Briefs," and to reschedule the hearing for mid-November 2022 or early January 2023. Mot. at 1. According to the Agency, no further discovery is warranted to comply with the EAB's Order, and the hearing should be held as soon as practicable to align with a 75-day statutory deadline. Mot. at 2-7. Petitioner AMVAC Chemical Corporation filed a brief in opposition ("Response") to the Motion on October 17, 2022. Among other arguments, AMVAC asserted that the parties should be permitted to request discovery, that issues to be considered on remand involve factual disputes for which discovery is appropriate, and that specific discovery requests should be argued by motion rather than broadly prohibited. Response at 6-9. AMVAC further contends that the Agency's litigation strategy caused this proceeding to exceed the statutory deadline and that one of AMVAC's key witnesses is unavailable during the Agency's proposed hearing dates. Response at 4-6, 10.

The rules governing this proceeding permit me "to take actions and decisions in conformity with statute or in the interests of justice." 40 C.F.R. § 164.40(d). In light of the EAB's reading of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136a(c)(2)(B)(iv), which requires an evaluation at hearing of whether AMVAC took "appropriate steps" to provide necessary data to the Agency, permitting the parties to pursue some discovery is in conformity with the statute and is in the

interests of justice. A blanket prohibition on discovery without further consideration of specific discovery requests that might be made is not warranted. Additionally, this Tribunal's existing resources, current docket of cases, and upcoming holiday season do not allow for the scheduling of a hearing earlier than January 2023. At the same, this Tribunal is mindful of the statutory deadline that passed while the EAB was considering AMVAC's appeal and will therefore shorten the previously established deadlines.

Accordingly, the Agency's Motion is **GRANTED** in part and **DENIED** in part, and the Hearing and Scheduling Order Following Remand is amended to reschedule the hearing and prehearing deadlines as follows:¹

<u>Additional Discovery</u>. The parties are encouraged to engage in mutually agreed upon discovery so as to expedite the hearing and simplify contested issues. However, if the parties cannot agree on a discovery matter, the deadline for filing a motion seeking further discovery shall be October 25, 2022. All discovery shall be completed no later than December 2, 2022.

Other Motions. Motions for subpoenas shall be filed no later than **December 9**, **2022**. Motions in limine shall be filed no later than **15 days** prior to hearing. Likewise, a party may freely amend its witness list, narrative summaries of expected testimony, documents, or exhibits, except that any amendment sought within **15 days** of the hearing must be accompanied by a motion demonstrating good cause for the amendment.

<u>Joint Stipulations</u>. The time allotted for the hearing is limited. Therefore, the parties shall make a good faith effort to stipulate as much as possible to matters that cannot reasonably be contested. This practice ensures that the hearing is concise and focused solely on those matters that can only be resolved after an evidentiary hearing. Any stipulations reached by the parties shall be filed as a Joint Set of Stipulated Facts, Exhibits, and/or Testimony on or before **December 23, 2022**.

<u>Prehearing Briefs</u>. The Agency shall file a prehearing brief on or before **January 6**, **2023**. Petitioner AMVAC shall file a prehearing brief in response to the Agency's prehearing brief on or before **January 13**, **2023**. In that this Tribunal and the EAB have already issued substantive orders in this case, the parties need not include in its prehearing briefs a general statement as to the procedural and/or factual history of this case, nor the applicable law. Rather, this Tribunal would like the parties to address in their Prehearing Briefs the following:

A. The meaning of the phrase "within the time required by the Administrator" as used in 7 U.S.C. § 136a(c)(2)(B)(iv), citing any relevant statutory or regulatory history, case law, and/or or other authority relied upon for interpretation, including therein a statement as to the party's position regarding any specific time limits set by the Administrator for production of data set out in the Data Call-in Notice, with respect to each of the twenty data requirements set out in the Notice of Intent to Suspend ("NOITS"), which were in effect at the time the NOITS was issued;

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¹ These amendments do not change the Settlement and Status Report requirement established by the Hearing and Scheduling Order Following Remand.

- B. The meaning of the phrase "failed to take appropriate steps to secure the data required" as used in 7 U.S.C. § 136a(c)(2)(B)(iv), citing any relevant statutory or regulatory history, case law, and/or or other authority relied upon for interpretation;
- C. For each of the twenty data requirements set out in the NOITS, separately and with specificity, identify the evidence the party intends to offer at hearing in support of its position that AMVAC did or did not "fail to take appropriate steps to secure the data" requested by the Agency; and
- D. Identify with specificity any factual errors regarding the history of this matter set out in this Tribunal's Order on Respondent's Motion for Accelerated Decision or the EAB's Decision and Remand Order, citing in support any and all evidence supporting the error.

<u>Hearing</u>. The hearing in this matter will be held beginning promptly at **9 a.m. ET** on **Tuesday, January 24, 2023**, and continue as necessary through Friday, January 27, 2022. The hearing will take place at:

EPA Administrative Courtroom EPA East Building, Room 1152 1201 Constitution Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20460

Additional information about the hearing will be provided at a later date. The parties are hereby advised that the hearing will be held virtually using videoconferencing technology if conditions related to the spread of COVID-19 within Washington, D.C. require it as the scheduled hearing approaches.

SO ORDERED.

Susan L. Biro

Chief Administrative Law Judge

Dated: October 18, 2022 Washington, D.C.

In re FIFRA Section 3(c)(2)(B) Notice of Intent to Suspend Dimethyl Tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA) Technical Registration

AMVAC Chemical Corporation; Grower-Shipper Association of Central California; Sunheaven Farms, LLC; J&D Produce; Ratto Bros., Inc.; and Huntington Farms, Petitioners. Docket No. FIFRA-HO-2022-0002

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that the foregoing **Order on Respondent's Motion to Amend Hearing and Scheduling Order**, dated October 18, 2022, and issued by Chief Administrative Law Judge Susan L. Biro, was sent this day to the following parties in the manner indicated below.

Matt Barnwell
Attorney-Advisor

Copy by OALJ E-Filing System to:

Mary Angeles, Headquarters Hearing Clerk U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Administrative Law Judges Ronald Reagan Building, Rm. M1200 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, DC 20004

Copy by Electronic Mail to:

Forrest Pittman
Erin S. Koch
Pesticides and Toxic Substances Law Office
Office of General Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 2310A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460
Email: pittman.forrest@epa.gov
koch.erin@epa.gov

Attorneys for Respondent

Cristen S. Rose HAYNES BOONE 800 17th Street NW Washington, DC 20006 Email: cristen.rose@haynesboone.com James P. Rathvon
5814 Cromwell Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
Email: jprathvon@gmail.com
Attorneys for Petitioner "Grower Group"
(Grower-Shipper Association of Central
California, et al.)

David B. Weinberg
Tracy A. Heinzman
Keith A. Matthews
Hume M. Ross
Mark B. Sweet
WILEY REIN LLP
2050 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
Email: dweinberg@wiley.law
Email: theinzman@wiley.law
Email: kmatthews@wiley.law

Email: hross@wiley.law Email: msweet@wiley.law Timothy J. Donnelly AMVAC Chemical Corporation 4695 MacArthur Ct, Suite 1200 Newport Beach, CA 92660 Telephone: (949) 221-6115 timd@amvac.com Attorneys for Petitioner AMVAC Chemical Corporation

Dated: October 18, 2022 Washington, D.C.