



## **ECOROADMAP FAQs**

### **What is the goal of CropLife America's EcoRoadmap project?**

The goal of the EcoRoadmap project is to have regulatory agencies implement a fair, transparent, and credible risk assessment process that utilizes sound science and reliable data to affirm pesticide products can be used safely in the environment and comply with applicable environmental laws. The EcoRoadmap project will comprehensively address environmental issues including spray drift, volatile organic emissions, clean water, and risk assessment for ecological and endangered species, while working with other stakeholders to provide advice and solutions on policy and science questions regarding these issues to the Congress, EPA and other regulatory agencies.

### **Why is a more coordinated process between EPA, the Services and other agencies necessary?**

Historically, environmental statutes including the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Clean Air Act (CAA), and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) had separate and specific purposes, jurisdictions, and tracks of implementation and regulation. For example, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) was specifically designed to regulate the use of pesticides. However, recent court decisions have forced these separate tracks to merge, creating a complicated, inconsistent and often conflicting web of regulatory processes leading to increased costs, delays, and further litigation.

For example, EPA and the Services (Fish & Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries) do not agree about the appropriate use of scientific procedures, methods, and data for ESA consultations. Previously, consultations were not always conducted as required (often due to a insufficient time and resources), which lead to lawsuits from NGOs for noncompliance. Resulting court rulings have exacerbated conflicts between overlapping regulations and agencies, imposed unnecessary mitigations and loss of crop protection products or uses while decreasing acres of crop land available for production, destroying habitat and impeding the development and registration of new, more environmentally friendly pesticides. Recent consultations between EPA and the Services on endangered salmon species on the West Coast was caught in a morass of differing scientific opinions, procedures, and methodologies that required more than a year to resolve, resulting in mitigations that will affect anywhere from 6-47% of the cropland acres in

four states. A lack of knowledge of agricultural and integrated pest management practices; of labeled uses, directions, and requirements; and of EPA risk assessment methods, models, and data requirements and quality were evident in the opinions rendered by the Services.

### **What are some potential negative impacts to agriculture as a result of ESA mitigations from settlements?**

There is the potential for many negative impacts to agriculture, exports, food prices and the economy.

- Impacted acres from expanded or new buffer zone restrictions resulting from ESA consultations (e.g. recent BiOps) has the potential to disrupt farming and areas heavily reliant on farm economies.
  - Farm and ranch land was lost at a rate 51 percent faster in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Currently, these states already lead in high-quality farming acres lost due to development. Imposing additional buffer zones on existing land in use, further impacts available land resources in: Texas, Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Tennessee, Michigan, Alabama, Virginia, Wisconsin, New York, South Carolina, California, Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Minnesota.
  - This isn't just a pesticide issue. When water restrictions were put in place to protect Delta Smelt in the California valley, farmers and farm workers lost income and jobs. The overall economy in that region has been decimated as result.
- Food supply/ag exports could be negatively impacted as a result of acres being taken out of production, putting US growers on an unlevel playing field compared to their global competitors and reducing trade surplus.
- Cost of producing food will increase, and as a result, the cost of food will also rise at a time when the economy is still recovering.

### **What's needed?**

Increased communication and cooperation is necessary between EPA offices and the Services toward the development of consistent scientific methodologies, risk assessment procedures, and regulatory goals, thereby leading to greater levels of trust between these agencies and their staff.

- A refined ecological and endangered species risk assessment process accepted and administered by the agencies is needed to:
  - Accurately assess potential risk to species and the environment;
  - Properly utilize reliable, available data and risk assessment methodology;
  - When necessary, implement reasonable and practical risk mitigations; and
  - Reduce unnecessary label restrictions and render the registration process more predictable and reliable.

## **What's the solution?**

Methods and a standard decision-making paradigm must be adopted through a public process and agreed upon by EPA and the Services for use in their consultations, as well as by other agencies and regulatory stakeholders, that is:

- Transparent;
- Science-based, using reliable, current, available data;
- Predictable;
- Documentable;
- Implementable;
- Increases understanding of risk assessment process at the public level; and
- Without adverse impacts to the special needs of agriculture, necessary and/or beneficial pesticide products, or continued innovation.

## **What can Allies do?**

- Push for a seat at the table in the discussions with regulatory agencies to provide input on cultural practices in your commodities that impact the risk assessment, on how the products are used, if risk mitigation is necessary, the feasibility of different approaches.
- Communicate to Congress the adverse impacts of ESA court decisions and consultation process.
- Push Congress to fund and implement Section 1010 which requires ESA implementation programs to “minimize the impacts to persons engaged in agricultural food and fiber commodity production and other affected pesticide users and applicators”.
- Push for the development of a science based, transparent process with stakeholders, communication and consensus between/among the agencies, and better communication and understanding of risk assessment process at the public level.