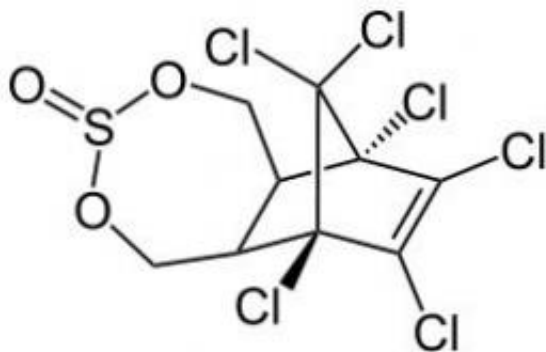


# UN targets endosulfan for elimination

May 9 2011, by Deborah Braconnier

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Structure of endosulfan. Image: Wikipedia.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Endosulfan is a leading pesticide used mainly on coffee, tea and cotton crops throughout the world, as well as a wood preservative. It belongs to a family of organic compounds known as organochlorines and is classified as one of the worst persistent organic pollutants. Because of this, it has become the most recent hazardous chemical added to the United Nations' list of chemicals to be eliminated.

On April 29th over 120 nations, under the Stockholm Convention, agreed to a global phase-out of [Endosulfan](#), with most usage ending in 2012. There are certain conditions that will allow it to continue to be used until 2017 or until replacement products have been developed. One example is the control of bollworms in cotton crops.

The main producers of Endosulfan are India, China, Israel, Brazil, and

South Korea, with India being the main producer. India fought the ban initially but signed on when certain exemptions were included.

Endosulfan is highly toxic and can be lethal if absorbed through the skin, inhaled or swallowed. It can cause problems in the reproductive system, neurological problems, and has been linked as a possible cause to hypothyroidism as well as breast cancer.

Endosulfan breaks down to endosulfane sulphate and endosulfane diol, each with a half-life of some 60 to 800 days. Originally it was believed to only remain in the area of use and not be transported by air; however, recent studies have shown contamination all over the world. Soil and water samples in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Pakistan, Spain, Portugal, Nigeria, South Africa, the Philippines, Mexico, the U.S. and even some locations in the Arctic region. Chemical residue has also been detected in food samples around the world.

While the U.S. is not a partner in the Stockholm Convention, the EPA announced last year that there would be an end to Endosulfan use by 2016.

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