



Issue 1: June 2013

University of Hertfordshire Agricultural Substance databases NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first newsletter relating to the University of Hertfordshire's agricultural substance databases. Despite the first of our databases (the Pesticide Properties DataBase, PPDB) being available online since 2007 we have only just got around to producing a newsletter. The research team responsible for delivering the databases have been exceptionally busy for the last year or so with other projects and, consequently, database management and updating has had to be restricted to urgent work only. Now we have a little more time we are addressing the large data backlog we have and a newsletter seems the best way to bring you up to date.

In this issue

- Databases updated, new records added and new parameters; website and support documents increased, updated and refreshed.
- Usage continues to grow and more than a million page loads of information (i.e. substance records) will be downloaded this year.
- Non-English language versions of the PPDB to be phased out.
- The cost of Special Use Licences (e.g. Ms Access / Excel versions, commercial and third party software and database applications) will increase from July 1st 2013.



Recent development activity

In recent weeks we have undertaken quite a lot of development and management activity. We have added over 75 new records across all three databases and there are more to come. We have also undertaken quite a lot of general updating especially for new substances that have only recently been evaluated and with respect to the human health data. For the extended off-line MS Access version of the PPDB many more records have been added for soil degradation and adsorption data.

Chiral molecules are now identified and there is a new field to display hazard statements in the new CLP regulation format (European Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (CLP Regulation), adopting the EU Globally Harmonised System (GHS)). This data is not available for all records yet but we will add it as we identify it in the coming weeks and months.

We have also refreshed the PPDB home page and all support documentation has also been updated and some new documents have been added. Unfortunately, we have had one or two instances recently when our copyright and IPR have not been respected and so we have had to tighten up our terms and conditions of use. This will have no affect on the majority of users but will help protect us from misuse. The Terms and Conditions of Use document can be found on the database home page.

History

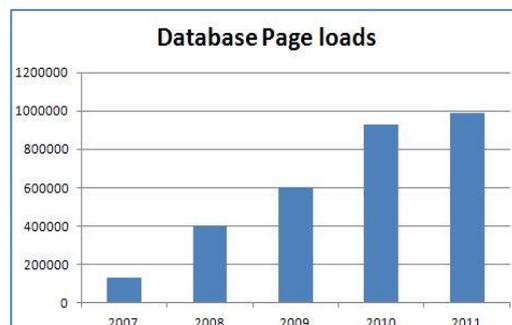
For those of you unaware of the history of our databases, you may be interested to know that the PPDB can be traced back to 1996. At that time we were undertaking a research project to develop a computerised environmental management support tool for farmers and, as part of that system, we developed a pesticide database. That software system (EMA – Environmental Management for Agriculture) was available on CD-Rom for many years and was annually updated which meant that the pesticide database gradually expanded. As we became involved in other research projects the database continued to grow and other researchers began to

request copies for their own use. In 2007, when EMA finally became out dated the pesticide database was moved online and launched as a service. The Biopesticide (BPDB) and Veterinary Substance databases (VSDB) were added a few years later.

Database Usage

We have online tracking software in place which enables us to see how much the databases are being used, in which countries and, in some instances, by which organisations (via IP address identification). At the time of writing (Monday pm) we have users from across Europe, the USA, Canada, Vietnam, Mexico, Taiwan, Japan and Ecuador.

Usage continues to amaze us and it is still growing. As you can see from the chart, usage has grown from around 130,000 page loads downloaded in 2007 to almost a million pages last year. Currently, typical usage is around 3,500 to 4,500 pages per day but 5,500 is not that unusual and so the million pages per year landmark will be surpassed this year.



You may not be aware that the database does not receive any core funding and is largely a labour of love. The only funding we receive is that from licence sales and consultancy. Consequently, we have to use our time and efforts wisely to ensure we can continue to deliver a service that so many people rely on. With respect to the non-English versions of the database, the language translations are no longer supported. We have noticed that the majority of users are accessing the English version with some use of the French and Spanish versions. Very few end users are accessing the Slovenian, Polish and Italian versions and so, to reduce our work load, we plan to phase out these versions this summer. We will put re-directional pages in place but can you please amend any bookmarks you have accordingly. It is probable that, unless we can identify funding for translation or identify a willing individual who will do the work free of charge on an ongoing basis, the French and Spanish versions will also be removed later this year. If and when this is planned we will let you know.

Licence fees

We have not increased our licence fees for over two years but this can't go on forever and, unfortunately, from July 1st prices will increase. Licence fees apply to users wishing to use the database off-line in MS Access format and for users wishing to extract data from our system into their own databases and software applications. Details of the new prices can be found in the Goods and Services document on the relevant home pages of each database. If you already have a multi-year agreement in place, these increases will not kick in until that agreement expires.

Our licence administration process has also changed and we will need you to return a signed licence agreement before we can release the database to you, even if we have agreed not to charge you.

Contact us:

If you want more information on anything in this newsletter or on any aspect of the databases please contact us. Similarly if we have something wrong or something is missing do please let us know.

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