



Quick approval of new pesticide bill by Congress foreseen by Rep. Miller

THE MILLER BILL, calling for establishment of pesticide residue tolerances, has been favorably reported on by the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. In an exclusive interview with *AG AND FOOD*, Rep. A. L. Miller (R-Neb.), author of the bill, explains its provisions and discusses its possible implications.

Q: Dr. Miller, your bill to amend certain sections of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act is of vital interest to the pesticide industry. Would you outline its major provisions?

A: "The major provisions of H.R. 7125, which deals with residues of pesticide chemicals in or on raw agricultural commodities, are:

- It requires the establishment of a tolerance for a chemical additive before the product can be sold in interstate and foreign commerce. Under existing law, a product can be placed on the market without a tolerance being established.
- It provides a time limit within which the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare must act on the applications for a tolerance.
- It eliminates the burdensome public hearings presently required before a tolerance can be established.
- It provides for an independent panel of experts to advise the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare on technical questions.
- It sets up a workable procedure and definite course of action on applications so that industry will know what it must do.
- It paves the way for judicial review through the Administrative Procedure Act.
- Finally, it incorporates all parts of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act which deal with pesticides into a special section. It also fully recognizes the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

Q: Why do you feel such changes in the law are necessary at this time?

A: The present law is quite cumbersome and has proved to be most ineffective in accomplishing the purposes for which it was passed. The new developments in the pesticide field have vastly surpassed the broken-down machinery which is supposed to govern them. I was a member of the select committee—often referred to as the



As a physician and a farm owner, Rep. A. L. Miller (R-Neb.) has a double interest in pesticide tolerances

Delaney Committee—which investigated the use of chemical additives and it was discovered that over 40,000 different pesticides were on the market while tolerances for only one product had been established.

The end result has been forcing industry to be either overcautious or without caution. By this I mean good sound companies have been fearful that at any time Food and Drug would establish a tolerance which would be impossible to meet. It could financially

ruin many of the companies now in operation.

On the other hand, the present situation has encouraged the 'fly-by-night' operators who jump into competition, cutting every economic corner, with complete disregard for the public health. This group is discrediting the reliable operator who does his utmost to ensure the public health.

Q: The House committee already has presented a favorable report on your bill. Do you believe that it will be passed by both Houses of Congress when it comes up for a vote?

A: Yes, I am quite confident that my bill will be passed by both houses. Senator George Aiken (R.-Vt.) has introduced the companion bill (S. 2868) in the Senate and I have every reason to believe, since the House committee has acted on my bill, that action will be forthcoming very soon in the Senate. This legislation has universal approval and is definitely in the best interests of the public health. I can foresee no opposition to it.

Q: When do you believe the bill will be enacted?

A: I believe the bill will be enacted within the next 60 to 90 days. I am quite certain it will be passed during this Congress.

Q: Do you foresee any other legislative action on the general subject of chemicals in feed?

A: It is my understanding that several segments of the feed industry are already busy at work drafting legislation which would deal specifically with chemical additives in foods.

I know some members of Congress are also working on this type legislation. As you may know, I have introduced legislation on this subject (H.R. 4901) and hearings were held on the bill last July in conjunction with the pesticide bill, but at my request no hearings were held.

The reason I asked that the hearings be canceled was I did not feel it was the common ground so necessary to ensure a favorable report.

Q: Do you personally have any plans for future action?

I am still working on this legislation and want to get all the wrinkles ironed out. I hope to have a few more conferences with all interested parties. As you know, this is a very controversial subject and there are many schools of thought as to what this legislation should contain. I am a great believer in hammering all of these questions out on the anvil of debate. It will take a great deal more study.

Thank you, Dr. Miller.