
IR-4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

QA Focus -(30th in a series of helpful GLP updates and other important information)

Update from the IR-4 Quality Assurance (QA) Committee

QA held its annual QA Planning Meeting on February 25-26, 2003 in Washington DC. Targeting this year's in-life inspections was completed and the Regional Field Coordinators have been provided with the list to distribute to the Field Research Directors. The 2003 final report submission list was reviewed with the help of Dr. Dan Kunkel. The IR-4 QAU has a very aggressive submission plan ahead of us this year and with everyone's cooperation and assistance this may prove to be as productive and successful a year as last.

Dr. Van Starner and Mr. Martin Beran updated the IR-4 QAU on the activities of the IR-4 Training Committee. Please see Van's report on all their wonderful ideas and activities.

The IR-4 QAU had a visitor from our Canadian minor use counterparts to discuss the coordination of QA activities on our joint project trials for 2003. Dr. Al Hamill joined our discussions. A big thank you to Dr. Hamill for his participation. The IR-4 QAU looks forward to coordinating these joint projects.

Article by Tammy White

A New View

In 2002, some of our field researchers were involved in a new venture for IR-4, the conduct of Dislodgeable Foliar Residue (DFR) trials. These tests are designed to assess the amounts of crop protection product potentially available on plants with which humans will come into contact while performing their work. For example, during the production of ornamental mum plants, workers would normally come into contact with treated plant material. Are these people at risk? Well, that's what the EPA would like to know, and IR-4 will help them find out with these trials.

Anybody working with new projects like these has a lot to think about. It was necessary to develop some unique notebook forms, for one thing, to tally the MANY samples and their subsequent handling. The sampling process required many hours all during the week. QA personnel also have a lot to think about as we prepare to audit the raw data.

In these situations, we need to go "beyond the checklist." Each new procedure's data must be carefully audited by applying both basic and advanced QA techniques. Actually, it's a very good exercise for an auditor. The findings and comments from these first data reviews, combined with the experiences gained in the field and laboratory, are valuable information. Taken together, it will enhance any future DFR work, since we will have practical experience to use in preparing the next protocols, forms, SOP's and work schedules.

Studies like these are quite challenging, but they help us all "keep sharp" since we are applying our various expertise to each of our roles. Hopefully, we will be giving the Agency the information necessary to make decisions about human safety in plant production. Just another way that IR-4 helps the American public!

Article by Kathryn Hackett-Fields