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Official Notice Number 2010-07 IFOAM Norms

Issued: November 19, 2010

Spinosad

Background

Spinosad is an insecticide where the active ingredient is derived from a naturally occurring soil dwelling bacterium called *Saccharopolyspora spinosa*. The bacteria produce compounds (metabolites) while in a fermentation broth which can be formulated into an insecticide that combines the efficacy of a synthetic insecticide with the benefits of a biological pest control organism.

Spinosad is reported to not harm most beneficial insects or predatory mites. Its soil absorption is moderately strong and it degrades rapidly in the environment primarily through photosynthesis. Spinosad shows low toxicity when ingested by mammals and no additional adverse effects from chronic exposure. Studies on spinosad show slight toxicity to birds, moderate toxicity to fish, and slight to moderate toxicity to aquatic invertebrates. However, it is highly toxic to oysters and other marine molluscs and to bees.

The IOAS Accreditation Committee recently had occasion to discuss whether spinosad could be permitted under IFOAM Basic Standards Appendix 3 - Crop protectants and growth regulators which permits the use of bacterial preparations under section III - microorganisms.

Decision

Spinosad is a bacterial preparation. Such preparations are allowed for use as crop protectants and growth regulators under IFOAM Basic Standard Appendix 3, III. Spinosad is therefore permitted for use under IFOAM Basic Standards.

End