

March 22, 2021

House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
417 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155



Chairman Sundin and Members of the Committee:

Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative is a grower-owned sugarbeet processing facility located at the southern end of the Red River Valley in Wahpeton, North Dakota. Comprised of nearly 500 shareholder/growers, we have proudly been in business since 1974 and raise approximately 105,000 acres of sugarbeets annually across southeastern North Dakota and west-central Minnesota. On behalf of our membership, Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative submits the following testimony in opposition to HF-670.

Chlorpyrifos (trade name 'Lorsban') is the most effective post-emerge insecticide product that is utilized by our growers for the control of Sugarbeet Root Maggot (SBRM). SBRM is an insect pest in which larvae feed on and damage sugarbeet roots. Where Chlorpyrifos is needed but is not used, we can see losses of up to 2,042 lbs. (> 30%) of Recoverable Sugar/acre and \$300/acre in lost revenue. (Dr. Boetel, NDSU - Combined Analysis 2016-2019 Research).

Chlorpyrifos has been registered for use in sugarbeet by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for decades and when applied according to the label, is a safe and effective crop protection product. A common misconception surrounding the use of chlorpyrifos is that it is annually applied as a 'blanket' application – nothing could be farther from the truth. Chlorpyrifos applications within our cooperative are structured in a very targeted and precise manner. Carefully monitoring the SBRM population through the use of insect traps and an advance population forecasting system, our Agricultural Staff works on a one-on-one basis with each of our growers (who are licensed pesticide applicators) to make the decision whether or not a field needs to be treated based upon a proven economic threshold developed by the entomology departments of both North Dakota State University and the University of Minnesota.

It is vitally important to our Cooperative to continue to have Chlorpyrifos available as insecticide in our arsenal to control SBRM. Sugarbeets are a relatively small acreage crop compared to others and keeping crop protection products labeled that are proven to work in a safe and effective manner is crucial as there are very few tools and options available. Although small, sugarbeets have a major impact on the viability of farms and production agriculture in our region, it is important that you allow us to continue to be good stewards of this product and strongly oppose HF-670.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Metzger", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mike Metzger, Ph.D.
Vice President – Agriculture & Research
Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative