

# METHYL BROMIDE UPDATE'

Clarence Lemons<sup>2</sup>

The future availability of methyl bromide is in deep trouble. Not only will the loss of methyl bromide have an effect on the forest nursery industry but will result in a serious economic loss across the board for those who rely on methyl bromide to aid in producing a crop.

At the last United Nations Montreal protocol meeting the agreement reached was for developed nations will have methyl bromide for use until 2005 with a 25 percent reduction in 1999 and additional reductions in 2001 and 2003. Undeveloped nations would have the use of methyl bromide until 2010 with no reductions and no restrictions.

Our troubles go every deep with the U.S. Clean Air Act. When methyl bromide was used as a ozone depleter, it triggered the Clean Air Act which called for it to phase out January 1, 2001.

An effort is being put forward to get Congress and the White House to agree to follow the mandate of the Montreal protocol. House bill 2609 introduced by representative Miller (R-FL) and Condit (DC) to allow use of methyl bromide until alternatives are made available now has 61 co-sponsors. We still need your help. A phone call, letter or visit to a congress person or senator could make the difference. Don't give up.

During this potential phase down of methyl bromide, we have been working in conjunction with Dr. Bill Carey and others at the Auburn Co-op. We have put out plots for the last several years to identify which compounds would come closest to providing control similar to methyl bromide.

We have not identified any product that will replace methyl bromide. Given the broad spectrum control and general

effectiveness of methyl bromide, the compounds used in plot work have been 1,3 dichloropropene with chloropicrin and **metam** sodium with chloropicrin. In some tests herbicide eptam was used to give added control of nutsedge.

The 1 ,3-d/**chloropicrin** mixture can be applied with our present methyl bromide applicators with some modifications and would be covered with plastic. This combination has shown to have some promise as a compound to use if we lose methyl bromide,

We have also tested a combination of **metam** sodium/ chloropicrin without using plastic for several years and are pleased with results we are seeing from this combination of products.

While we see some promise with the combination of compounds we must keep in mind that most of the test sites have been fumigated with methyl bromide for several years. We must consider that disease and weed pressure may have been reduced. We are hoping to be able to test the combinations on fields that have not had fumigation to see what results are produced.

Data generated from these studies were collected by the Auburn Co-op and those interested in copies of data should contact the Auburn Co-op.

Any one interested in having an application of the 1,3d/ chloropicrin or **metam sodium/chloropicrin** should contact us at our nearest location or call me at 1-800-662-41 30 for additional information.

If anyone desires additional information on the methyl bromide contact Doug Curtis at 1-800-637-9486 ext.229.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lemons, C. 1999. Methyl bromide update. In: Landis, T.D.; Barnett, J.P., tech. coords. National proceedings: forest and conservation nursery associations-1996. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-25. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station: 66.

<sup>2</sup>Hendrix and Dail, Inc., P.O. Box 646, Greenville, NC 276354646.