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## Job losses threatened by atrazine ban

Jul 8, 2010 9:57 AM, By Forrest Laws, Farm Press Editorial Staff

Commenting on the potential loss of 21,000 to 48,000 jobs, Coursey said the "range is wide because we have never before banned a product on which so many depend and for which suitable replacements have a wide variety of prices and application regimes."

The U.S. economy struggled to add 83,000 private sector jobs during the month of June, a figure seen by some as a sign of an anemic recovery.

But more than half of those jobs could be wiped out if EPA decides to knuckle under to the wishes of environmental groups and cancel the registration of the corn herbicide atrazine, a new study shows.

Don L. Coursey, an economist with the University of Chicago, says banning atrazine would cost the country between 21,000 and 48,000 jobs from the corn production sector alone. He presented his research at a briefing at the National Press Club in Washington.

"When I first started looking at atrazine several years ago, I thought it was very rare that a well-known, effective product like atrazine might be just taken off the market," he said at the briefing sponsored by the Triazine Network. "Since then, I've learned that such a ban would have a devastating effect on the corn economy."

Coursey estimates atrazine's annual production value to corn alone to be between \$2.3 billion and \$5 billion. Atrazine's additional value to sorghum, sugar cane and other uses would increase these totals.

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In 2006, EPA finished an unprecedented 12-year review that found atrazine to be no threat to health or safety when used appropriately. Last year, however, the agency announced it was planning yet another review, apparently because of a *New York Times* article that listed health claims by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the group that created the Alar scare that nearly wrecked the apple industry.

It was the first time in history EPA initiated a review process without citing sound science. Prior to 2006, EPA reviewed nearly 6,000 scientific studies before re-registering atrazine.

While the job losses in the corn sector could push agricultural unemployment up by 2.6 percent, banning atrazine would have a ripple effect throughout other segments of agriculture, according to the National Sorghum Producers.

"If atrazine is banned producers would also lose propazine, which is another important triazine herbicide for sorghum," said Gerald Simonsen, chairman of the NSP and sorghum grower in Ruskin, Neb. "Because there are fewer alternative herbicides available for sorghum, taking atrazine off the market would have a dramatic and costly impact on the U.S. sorghum industry."

"Atrazine remains the most important herbicide used by sorghum farmers," said Tim Lust, NSP CEO. "The results from this study further confirm what we have always known to be true about atrazine."

"Atrazine is essential to U.S. agriculture," said Jere White, executive director of the Kansas Corn Growers Association. "We appreciate Dr. Coursey's findings and will distribute them to our members, the EPA and to our elected representatives. With unemployment still painfully high across the nation, we can't afford to lose as many as 50,000 jobs and the corn yield that sustains them."

White said farmers have few alternatives available if atrazine was taken off the market. "If there were other herbicides out there, I think farmers would be using them as part of their resistance management program. The fact is that, even with glyphosate-resistant crops, most farmers still apply atrazine for residual weed control."

Coursey's statement can be viewed at <http://agsense.org/>.

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Jul 10	83.32	0.61
Oct 10	77.15	-0.81
Dec 10	73.70	-0.86

C - CORN - CBOT	Last	Chg
Jul 10	375'0	4'2
Sep 10	383'0	4'6
Dec 10	394'0	4'6

S - SOYBEANS - CBOT	Last	Chg
Jul 10	993'0s	28'6
Aug 10	974'4	6'6
Sep 10	941'0s	28'4

W - WHEAT - CBOT	Last	Chg
Jul 10	515'6s	23'0
Sep 10	531'6	1'2

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(New Course)

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**New Course**

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American agriculture exports 20 to 30 percent of its production annually. For specific



commodities, the percentage is much higher. When recommending and applying pest management products for crops, license Pest Control Advisers (PCAs) and applicators and farmers must be aware of which products applied are in compliance with Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) established by foreign customers. This CE course details the MRL issue and why compliance is critical to marketing into world trade.

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