

EPA watchdog to determine if agency followed ‘scientifically sound principles’ in approving dicamba herbicides

The inspector general of the EPA is planning to look into whether EPA acted properly when it registered dicamba in 2016 and 2018, as well as review states’ use of Section 24(c) labels, often used for dicamba in recent years.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) functions as an internal government watchdog for all the major federal and state agencies. Each government agency, including EPA, has an OIG division within it that regularly reviews the agency’s actions and programs for fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement.

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The 2020 plan states that inspectors plan to look into the EPA’s past registrations of dicamba herbicides XtendiMax (Bayer), Engenia (BASF) and FeXapan (Corteva) in the second half of 2021.

The purpose of the investigation will be to “determine whether the EPA adheres to federal requirements and scientifically sound principles for the 2016 registration and 2018 renewal for the new uses of the dicamba herbicide,” according to the OIG annual plan.

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The investigation would add yet another level of scrutiny to the registrations of dicamba herbicides, which have come under fire since their release in 2017 for widespread claims of off-target injury to sensitive crops from scientists, farmers, environmentalists and rural residents in the Midwest and South.

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