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AS 4708: 2013

Interpretation of Requirement 5.6 *Chemical Use* for certification of forest managers under the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS)

BACKGROUND

The Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AS 4708:2013) is the core of the Australian Forest Certification Scheme. The AFCS is endorsed by the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). In order to retain PEFC endorsement the AFCS must be in compliance with a number of PEFC Standards including PEFC ST 1003:2010, *Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements*.

PEFC ST 1003:2010 and AS 4708:2013 both contain specific requirements addressing chemical use in forest management (see below). It should be noted that there are other requirements which address related aspects of chemical use such as compliance with the law, pollution prevention, education and training etc.

PEFC ST 1003:2010 Sustainable Forest Management

5.2.9 The WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides and other highly toxic pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.

Note: Any exception to the usage of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be defined by a specific forest management standard.

5.2.10 Pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use, and any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited.

Note: “pesticides banned by international agreements” are defined in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001, as amended.

AS4708–2013 Sustainable Forest Management

Requirement 5.6 *Chemical Use*

1 The forest manager shall minimize the use of chemicals and any adverse impacts arising from their use.

2 The forest manager shall not use World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B pesticides unless legally approved for use.

3 The forest manager shall not use pesticides banned by any international agreements defined in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001.

Australia has a rigorous legislative and regulatory framework for the registration, control and use of pesticides. The combination of Australian law and the specific requirements in the Australian Standard (AS 4708:2013) creates a framework which is consistent with the intent of the PEFC requirements. Compliance with the law is required by separate requirements of the Standard (Requirements 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4)

ASSESSMENT

Following publication of AS 4708:2013, and in response to matters raised in the PEFC Extraordinary Assessment process, AFS Ltd sought further advice from the Standards Reference Committee (SRC4708) responsible for the development of AS 4708:2013 regarding the interpretation of Requirement 5.6 Chemical Use.

The Committee considered that Requirement 5.6 part 3. is entirely consistent with PEFC requirements given that the Australian Government ratified the Stockholm Convention on 20 May 2004, and obligations relating to it came into force for Australia on 18 August 2004. In addition, deregistration of virtually every agricultural use of organochlorines in Australia had occurred by the end of 1985. In 1987, the States and Territories commenced organochlorine stock recalls and the Australian customs regulations were amended to prohibit the import of organochlorines into Australia, unless Ministerial approval had been obtained. The committee has not identified any other pesticides whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate within the food chain beyond their intended use, which are legally available and approved for forest use within Australia.

The Committee noted that there may be instances where particular chemicals are the appropriate or only means of dealing with a specific threat and a forest manager may have no option but to use a certain chemical to meet other legal obligations (i.e. to control a specific pest) or ensure sustainable forest management outcomes. Clause 5.2.9 of the PEFC Standard does allow for such situations with respect to the usage of WHO Type Ia and Ib pesticides.

In the context of the above, and in order to provide reassurance to PEFC and international stakeholders, the Committee has sought to define any and all limited circumstances under which any specified WHO Ia, Ib pesticides could be used under AS 4708:2013 Requirement 5.6 part 2. At this time, and unless a new interpretation is agreed by SRC4708 and issued by AFS Ltd, the only pesticide which is permitted (i.e. covered by this interpretation) is sodium monofluoroacetate.

Other listed pesticides Warfarin and Brodifacoum are registered for use in Australia for rodent control and can be purchased in certain formulations by any user. However, this usage would relate to control of rodents in the built environment, not in the forest management context.

Approved by SRC4708

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INTERPRETATION

1. *The forest manager shall minimize the use of chemicals and any adverse impacts arising from their use.*

SRC4708 interpret this requirement to mean that any highly toxic pesticides shall not be used unless no other viable alternative is available.

2. *The forest manager shall not use World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B pesticides unless legally approved for use.*

SRC4708 interprets this requirement to include approval by SRC4708, as well as any relevant statutory approvals. It has reviewed the listing of World Health Organisation Type 1A and 1B pesticides, registered for use in Australia and the current and anticipated requirements of forest managers and determined that only the following listed chemical(s) may be used in the Defined Forest Area of a forest manager certified against AS4708–2013 and only in the circumstances and in accordance with the conditions listed.

<i>Chemical</i>	<i>Relevant Listing Category</i>	<i>Circumstances where use permitted</i>	<i>Conditions of use</i>
Sodium monofluoroacetate (1080)	<i>Class 1a</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative control of 'Declared Pests' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Compliance with Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) requirements for use.</i> <i>Relevant State or local government chemical use authorities in place.</i> <i>No other viable commercial alternative is found to be available through formal assessment.</i> <i>If no other viable commercial alternative is found, develop and implement management strategies that minimize the amount of 1080 applied with the aim of gradually reducing reliance on 1080 over time.</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Control of native pests where severely impacting sustainable forest management outcomes.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Compliance with Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) requirements for use.</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Relevant State or local government chemical use authorities and relevant pest management permits in place.</i>
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<i>Chemical</i>	<i>Relevant Listing Category</i>	<i>Circumstances where use permitted</i>	<i>Conditions of use</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use forms part of an integrated damage mitigation (IDM) strategy, that includes consideration of commercially appropriate alternate control measures.</i> • <i>If no other viable commercial alternative is found, develop and implement management strategies that minimize the amount of 1080 applied with the aim of gradually reducing reliance on 1080 over time.</i>