U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Inspector General

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At a Glance

Why We Did This Evaluation

We performed this evaluation to determine the progress of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's implementation of Section 408(p)(3)(A) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act, which requires the EPA to test all pesticide chemicals for human endocrine-disruption activity. We also sought to determine compliance with Section 408(p)(6), which requires the EPA to take action if it finds, after testing and evaluation, that a substance disrupts the human endocrine system.

Endocrine systems regulate biological processes in humans and animals. Endocrine disruptors are chemicals found in many products that mimic, block, or disrupt the normal function of hormones. The EPA developed its Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program in 1998.

This evaluation addresses the following:

- *Ensuring the safety of chemicals.*

This evaluation addresses these top EPA management challenges:

- *Communicating risks.*
- *Complying with key internal control requirements (risk assessments).*

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List of OIG reports.

EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Has Made Limited Progress in Assessing Pesticides

What We Found

Without the required testing and an effective system of internal controls, the EPA cannot make measurable progress toward complying with statutory requirements or safeguarding human health and the environment against risks from endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

Twenty-four years after the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 amendments were passed, the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention has not implemented Section 408(p)(3)(A) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to test all pesticide chemicals for endocrine-disruption activity. In addition, the OCSPP's Office of Pesticide Programs recommended in 2015 that 17 pesticides needed additional testing for endocrine disruption in wildlife in order to provide the data needed to conduct an ecological risk assessment, but that recommendation has not been implemented. Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program testing delays are inconsistent with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which directs the EPA to take appropriate action to protect public health if a substance is found to have an effect on the human endocrine system.

We also found that the EPA does not have controls in place to effectively implement the EDSP, such as strategic guidance documents or performance measures. Additionally, the EDSP has not conducted annual internal program reviews to monitor or assess progress in fulfilling regulatory requirements, and the EDSP has not effectively communicated with internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, previous OCSPP leadership provided acceptable corrective actions to meet the recommendations in a 2011 EPA Office of Inspector General report regarding the EDSP yet failed to actually implement those corrective actions beyond an initial period of compliance with them. Lastly, some EPA staff indicated that they were instructed to function as if the EDSP was eliminated from the EPA's budget.

Because the EDSP has not had effective internal controls in place since 2015, it cannot have reasonable assurance that the objectives of the program will be accomplished and that resources will be allocated efficiently and effectively. Moreover, an established system of management controls would provide mechanisms for consistent program operations.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We make ten recommendations to the assistant administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention related to testing, strategic planning, performance measurement, annual reviews, and internal and external communications. The recommendations are resolved with corrective actions pending.