



December 6, 2013

PRIVATE APPLICATOR MEETINGS AND CHANGES IN SPRAY TECHNOLOGY

I promised Brandy VanDeWalle, extension educator in Fillmore County, that I would “fill in” for a while as a guest writer for her column during maternity leave in December. For a former Saline County 4-H'er, no problem! The good news is the birth of Meredith Jane, born on December 1st that weighed in at 7 lbs. 1 oz. and 21.5 inches long. The last I heard, Mom and baby are doing fine.

Good timing on the VanDeWalle's part because of the December pause before a lot of agricultural meetings in Extension that are always planned for in the January through March time frame. This is the “bubble year” for a large number of pesticide applicators to renew their certification. You can recertify four different ways or by attending a Nebraska Crop Production Clinic (\$60.00), attend a private applicator meeting (\$30.00), complete a home study course book (\$60.00), or complete the eight-hour online course and quizzes (\$60.00). Most will choose a private applicator meeting in their county. There are 227 certifications expiring in 2014 in Fillmore County. Brandy has planned for three meetings in March, when she will be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, on Wednesday, March 5th, 1:30 p.m., Ag Hall – Fillmore County Fairgrounds, Geneva; Wednesday, March 5th, 6:00 p.m., Ag Hall – Fillmore County Fairgrounds, Geneva; and Tuesday, March 11th, 1:30 p.m., Ag Hall – Fillmore County Fairgrounds, Geneva.

Paul Hay in Gage County and I team up to provide training this year in Lancaster, Gage, Jefferson and Saline County or for 980 applicators. In Saline County, the schedule is as follows for 280 applicators or more: Thursday, January 30th, 9:00 a.m., Fire Hall, Tobias; Friday, January 31st, 9:00 a.m., St. Joseph's Catholic Church Hall, Friend; Monday, February 3rd, 1:00 p.m., Community Center, DeWitt; Friday, February 7th, 9:00 a.m., Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, Wilber; Monday, February 10th, 1:00 p.m., United Church of Christ, Crete; Wednesday, February 19th, 6:30 p.m., Saline Center, Rural Saline County. Other locations can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1gcFcZl>

One of the new items we will be demonstrating this year is a digital device that you can place under a spray nozzle to check for flow rate in 10 seconds or less. Essentially it replaces the old bucket or container method and it really works great. Compared to just doing a visual “walk around” to see if everything looks normal, it is faster and easier than ever to individually check nozzles. An applicator can avoid costly over- or under-application of chemicals from individual spray tips.

The Spot On Calibrator SC-1 made by Innoquest, won the 2010 AE50 Award from ASABE (The American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers) for newly designed, innovative products that deserve special recognition. If there is another competing product out there please let me know. I have talked to Brothers Equipment in Friend about this technology who is interested in handling it locally.

So I was curious and tried out this new technology on a commercial rig before the deep freeze hit. We checked all 54 nozzles on the large sprayer. The flow rate on the computer monitor matched



up to the total of all the nozzles that we measured with the Spot on Calibrator. We repeated the test on a single nozzle multiple times and it only varied by .03 gallons per minute. We found two nozzles out of 54 that were more than 5% off of the rig average. One was bad, the other had a particle in it, so it was cleaned.

If you are 10% off from the spray book values, it's time to get new spray tips. Ceramic spray tips, often not on the shelf in stores, can be ordered on many designs and are worth the investment. A leading company making sprayers is now standard on 15- AND 30-inch nozzle tip spacings that allows applicators to use the same tip at two selections. The 15-inch spacing doubles your volume which is needed when mixing glyphosate with other herbicides that require more contact and coverage. Air induction technology will remain important to reduce evaporation and drift when selecting new tips.

When Dicamba resistance technology hits the market, it is expected only course to extremely course tips will be allowed by EPA Federal label. These label changes will mean additional requirements for sprayer calibration affecting nozzle selection, pesticide preparation, and spray volume.

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