
Generic Herbicides Aid Profit Potential

Use of generic herbicides continues to increase for crops and turfgrass across the country. In many cases the generic products have the same active ingredients as the brand name products, just like my shampoo brand. Just like I do when I buy shampoo, herbicide buyers need to check the labels of the brands and compare. Often generic and proprietary product labels are the same. Differences of active ingredients could affect rate of application, timing of application, additives needed or effectiveness of the product. I am certain that the downturn of the economy will likely increase phone, mail and e-mail solicitation of miracle products. It is extremely unwise to respond to or purchase from such contacts without careful background review.

The farm chemical market is much like the pharmaceutical market. Generic pesticides must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. This approval covers both safe and effective use and manufacture or import regulations. The products also have to be registered in the State of Nebraska by the Department of Agriculture.

One great reference for herbicides is the Nebraska Guide for Weed Management. This ten-dollar publication available at the Extension Office, gives very useful information on the comparison of generic's and Brand Name herbicides. In addition it gives rates of application for all the main crops including commercial turfgrass and vegetables. The herbicide dictionary is valuable in sorting out names and formulations of products being offered in the marketing world. Many times marketing games mix herbicides at different rates of application. The herbicide guide has a quick reference to the amount of an active ingredient in each of these mixes. That is very helpful for comparisons. For example when we see the nightshade becoming a bigger problem in the soybean field we might check the atrazine rate in the corn side of the rotation. Atrazine is a very good control agent for nightshade.

There is nothing wrong with relying on the expertise of your agronomy dealer. You are a less than wise manager if you never do any background checking on options available to you for pricing, control, crop rotation, haying or grazing use, etc. The situation with the wheat fungicide applications this past summer should give farm operators, crop consultants, agronomists, and Extension Educators a heads up on the importance of checking and double checking details.

We all need to be very aware of the emerging glyphosate tolerant and glyphosate resistant weeds. I have several samples of potentially resistant marehail from Gage County being evaluated. Ivy-leafed Morning Glory is now widespread in the area. The expansion of resistant Palmer amaranth is sweeping the South and will likely be in our area within the year. Scouting and timely alternative herbicide treatment responses are of increasing importance to prevent train wrecks.

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