



Applicators making adjustments for in-crop dicamba herbicides

Application challenges with in-crop dicamba herbicides can go beyond potential for drift and volatility

We recently spoke with two Enlist Field Specialists – Andy Carriger and Steve Snyder – to get their take on comparing application processes for Enlist® herbicides and in-crop dicamba herbicides.

With all of the new restrictions around in-crop dicamba herbicides, many farmers have turned the spray responsibilities over to a licensed commercial applicator. But with increased regulation and procedures comes increased potential liability and risk for applicators. That may lead to fewer applicators available to spray dicamba, and increasing costs for farmers when applicators have to offset higher equipment and insurance expenses. From the perspectives of our Enlist Field Specialists, this boils down to three big challenges applicators are facing.

Investment in extra equipment

Applicators who are treating fields with crops that are not tolerant to dicamba have to be careful about sprayer clean-out and avoiding cross-contamination. Carriger noted, “It takes 23 times less dicamba to affect a [non-dicamba-tolerant] soybean versus 2,4-D. That means just four drops in a 15-gallon tank can have a negative impact.” He said that, often, when damage occurs, the first suspect is a contaminated sprayer – and one the applicator thought was clean. Carriger explained that oil-based formulations can be much trickier to fully flush from the sprayer and tend to hang up in seals, filters and pumps. Proper dicamba tank clean-out

requires the use of a qualified detergent. When asked whether the same issues exist for Enlist herbicides, Carriger noted, “Enlist herbicides, in contrast, are water-based, so they can be cleaned out of sprayers with water flushing.”

Some applicators are choosing to completely separate their spray equipment for dicamba applications. Carriger says applicators and farmers also need to be careful about mixing equipment, which can pose the same cross-contamination issues, and is often overlooked.





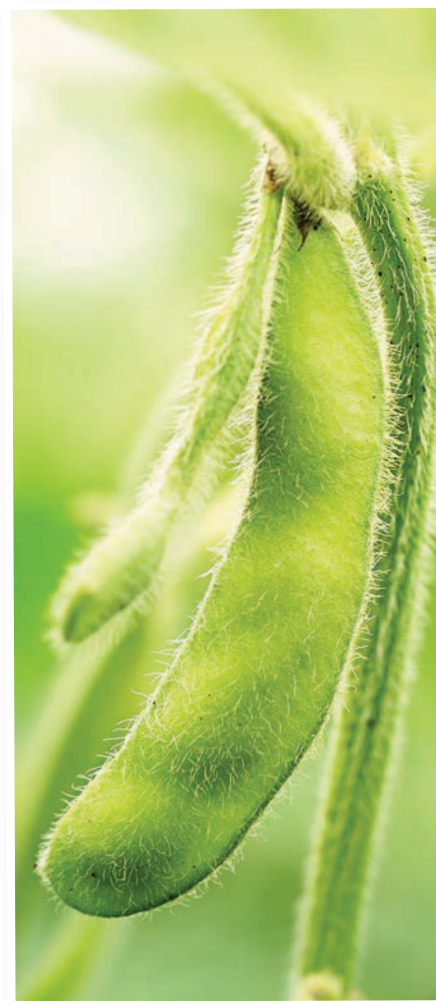
Carrying more insurance

When reports of drift and volatility with in-crop dicamba started hitting the news a couple of seasons ago, there was also a lot of talk about insurance. Applicator liability coverage typically protects against accidental damage. That can include drift, but not always volatility, since many policies have an exclusion for pollution, which can encompass volatility. Policies also won't cover applicators who aren't following application instructions to the letter, which is, of course, a challenge as instructions and restrictions get more complicated. And failing to follow application instructions or local regulations may not just mean a claim isn't covered – it can result in an applicator losing coverage altogether. Applicators may even want to consider a professional liability policy, which is akin to malpractice insurance for a doctor. Professional liability insurance is designed to protect an applicator should someone attribute crop injury to the applicator not adhering to the expected professional standards of the industry.

As claims of dicamba-related crop injury continue, insurance premiums and deductibles will likely grow right along with them, costs that could make their way to farmers.

Deciding whether to get out of the in-crop dicamba herbicide application business

Some commercial applicators are turning away altogether from spraying in-crop dicamba herbicides. "Some applicators just won't do it anymore," said Snyder. That may leave farmers with fewer choices for getting a complicated herbicide application done right. Of course, these farmers do have another choice: the Enlist® system. Applicator challenges with in-crop dicamba herbicides are just one of the reasons why so many growers are switching to Enlist E3® soybeans. With more variety options now available, many farmers are also really liking the Enlist E3 soybean genetics.



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