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OILSEEDS NEWS

WEED CONTROL OPTIONS FOR CANOLA GROWERS

Recent rainfall across many parts of central and western Victoria have probably arrived too late for getting the best out of certain herbicides applied in May, meaning that more sprays may be required for effective in-crop weed control.

Syngenta Territory Manager, Neville Marra said that under the dry conditions experienced, weed control has been less effective, and a proportion of the applied chemical had probably broken down.

“The half-life of the herbicide Gesatop (simazine) is 30 days, with about 45 days for Gesaprim (atrazine), which means that these chemicals are probably present in lower concentrations in paddocks than when they were first applied,” said Mr Marra.

Mr Marra expected that the herbicides may not work as effectively now, especially in paddocks where growers are relying completely on rainfall to incorporate them – and another spray may be necessary.

“I won’t be surprised if growers (of triazine-tolerant canola) have to come back with atrazine,” he said.

He also said that many growers had applied neither chemical - instead choosing to wait for rain - and have been inquiring about their weed control options.

The combined amount of simazine and atrazine applied to a paddock in any one growing season is restricted on the label.

Mr Marra said that it was extremely important that growers adhere to the label limits for simazine and atrazine within a growing season – which varies depending on the paddock’s soil pH.

Mr Marra believed that growers would get better weed control in dry starts to the season if they incorporated simazine and atrazine with harrows, rather than relying on rainfall.

In the past, most growers applied the chemicals before sowing, and incorporated them with their sowing operation. But for convenience, in the last four years it had become common practice to sow triazine-tolerant canola crops first and rely on rainfall to incorporate the chemicals, he said.

“I’ve challenged people to put out the triazines up-front. Incorporating with harrows does take away the uncertainty of relying on rainfall to incorporate these products.

“One or two millimetres which only wets the soil surface is not good enough to incorporate the product. When a grower asks me to nominate a quantity of rain I respond with ‘enough to wet the soil profile’.

Mr Marra said that simazine required more rainfall than atrazine for best performance.

“Gesatop (simazine) is less soluble than gesprim (atrazine), Unless you get good, wet conditions it will tend to give more marginal performance. Under wet conditions, simazine stays where it is applied and gives excellent performance.”
