



IRRIGATED CROPPING FORUM

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OILSEEDS NEWS

WEED CONTROL OPTIONS FOR CANOLA GROWERS

Recent rainfall events 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 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.

“Laboratory tests have found the half-life of the herbicide simazine is 30 days, with about 45 days for atrazine, which means that the chemicals are probably present in lower levels 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.

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 equipment. But for convenience, in 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. If possible incorporate with harrows.

“It is not good enough to just get one to two millimeters and wet the soil surface. That will not incorporate the product. When a grower asks me to nominate a quantity of rain I refuse to nominate a number, I always refer to the comment: ‘enough to wet the soil profile’.

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