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IDOA ANNOUNCES STATE-SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF HERBICIDE DICAMBA ON SOYBEANS FOR 2019

Goal to reduce off-target movement of dicamba products

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced today it will require Special Local Needs labels, including new restrictions, for the use of the herbicide dicamba on soybeans in Illinois for the 2019 growing season. Dicamba is primarily used on soybeans to control post-emergence broadleaf weeds.

On February 15, IDOA notified the manufacturers of the three dicamba-containing products approved for over-the-top application to dicamba-tolerant (DT) soybeans that additional application restrictions will be required for the 2019 growing season. The affected formulations of dicamba are Engenia by BASF, XtendiMax with Vapor Grip Technology by Bayer, and FeXapan plus Vapor Grip Technology by DuPont/Corteva. The additional restrictions beyond federally-approved labels are:

1. The implementation of a cutoff date of June 30, 2019, for application to DT soybeans.
2. Prohibiting application when the wind is blowing toward adjacent residential areas.
3. Required consultation of the FieldWatch sensitive crop registry before application, as well as compliance with all associated record keeping label requirements.
4. Maintaining the label-specified downwind buffer between the last treated row and the nearest downfield edge of any Illinois Nature Preserves Commission site.
5. Recommendation to apply product when the wind is blowing away from sensitive areas, which include but are not limited to bodies of water and non-residential, uncultivated areas that may harbor sensitive plant species.

The intent of these additional restrictions is to reduce the potential for off-target movement of these products, thereby reducing the potential for possible adverse impacts to dicamba-sensitive crops/areas. The decision to pursue state-specific Special Local Needs (SLN) labels was made in response to the record number of misuse complaints IDOA received during the past two years. In 2017, IDOA received 430 total complaints, 246 of which were related to the use of dicamba on soybeans. Those numbers rose to 546 total complaints, including 330 dicamba-related complaints, in calendar year 2018. Prior to the 2017 introduction of these new formulations of dicamba for use on tolerant soybean varieties, total pesticide misuse complaints average 110 per year from 1989 to 2016.

DICAMBA LABEL CHANGES/2222

Because of this significant increase in alleged pesticide misuse complaints, IDOA reviewed SLNs currently in place in other soybean-production states and worked with several Illinois stakeholder organizations before making the decision to require state-specific labels for Illinois.

“We now have two years of data showing how dicamba has the potential to drift off target,” said Acting Director John M. Sullivan. “It’s obvious measures need to be put in place so farmers can continue to effectively use these products, while also protecting surrounding property and crops.”

“Illinois Farm Bureau supports the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) in their administration of pesticide rules that they deem necessary to limit adverse effects to the environment,” said Richard Guebert, Jr., Illinois Farm Bureau President. “Dicamba-based products are useful and necessary tools in the fight against problematic weeds, helping farmers to remain productive and profitable. Illinois Farm Bureau will continue to work with IDOA and other partners into the future to find workable solutions for crop protection products.”

“The Illinois Corn Growers Association supports on-label use of crop protection products, along with farmer or applicator adherence to any additional label requirements issued by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. We know that Acting Director Sullivan takes seriously his obligation to protect the interests of many stakeholder groups, along with the preservation of public trust and transparency. We understand how the department came to this conclusion. It will no doubt cause difficulty for some farmers in certain areas and we are sensitive to that issue but encourage full compliance as per the 24(c) labels,” said Ted Mottaz, Illinois Corn Growers Association President.

“Co-existence is paramount when it comes to pesticide use,” said Jean Payne, President of the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA). “This proactive step demonstrates Illinois agriculture’s commitment to stewardship, and IFCA will educate our commercial applicator members regarding these pesticide label changes to ensure the continued legal and judicious use of this soybean production tool.”

"Volatilization and drift of pesticides are environmental issues that can impact our natural areas, water, and soil as well as Illinois' growing specialty crop industry," said Jennifer Walling, Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Council. "I appreciate the efforts by the Illinois Department of Agriculture and industry stakeholders to reduce drift from dicamba. These rules are a step forward to address these issues. We are looking forward to working with stakeholders to research and monitor the results of the new labels."

The three product registrants – BASF, Bayer, and DuPont/Corteva – have each submitted formal SLN labels for their respective dicamba-containing products to IDOA, which include the additional restrictions noted above. IDOA has submitted the resulting 24(c) registration packages for each product to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The SLN labels will be distributed in addition to the already federally-approved labels with all Engenia, XtendiMax, and FeXapan product sold for use in the State of Illinois for the 2019 growing season.