



Spraying for Weeds in Winter Wheat

As the day-time temperatures rise in May, dandelions will begin to come into head and the first flushes of annual and perennial weeds will become noticeable in wheat fields. When weeds start growing yields begin to suffer. Therefore, producers should plan their spray strategies as soon as they observe weed growth. Research indicates early weed control provides the best protection against yield loss due to competition for space and nutrients, especially when you are dealing with aggressive chickweed or dandelions.

However, before you spray your wheat remember to watch the night-time low temperatures because large temperature swings from the day-time high to the night-time low can make wheat more sensitive to herbicide spray. Cold nights can produce purple and rippled leaves which are not harmful to the wheat but, are good indicators the wheat might be sensitive to herbicide spray.

In the spring of 2004, our research group witnessed frost damage on wheat which increased the sensitivity to herbicide damage. If you use Refine Extra*, it should not be applied if over-night temperatures drop below 2°C and Estaprop* should not be applied if the over-night temperature drops below 5°C. If you have under seeded make sure you are not too late when spraying. Ensure that the clover is not past the 3rd trifoliolate stage when using Buctril M*.

Growers should also assess leaf diseases early in the season. Two diseases to be concerned with at this time of the year are Powdery Mildew and Septoria. If you observe either of these two leaf diseases you may want to consider tank mixing Tilt with your herbicide since early suppression of these diseases keep the field cleaner and reduces the potential for yield loss.

* Always refer to the label for correct product use.