

CROPS

EPA gives cheap herbicide a boost



Hi-Tech Farming

By TOM J. BECHMAN

GOOD things come to those who wait. Both the ag chemical industry and farmers may feel that way after waiting two decades for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to decide if it would re-register 2,4-D as a herbicide.

Earlier this year, EPA finally announced its decision to re-register 2,4-D after 21 years of research and re-registration evaluation. What's more, the agency announced it would not initiate a special review of 2,4-D. The herbicide is one of the oldest and most widely-used weed killers worldwide.

EPA's decision not to initiate a special review was linked to this statement: "The existing data do not support a conclusion that links human cancer to 2,4-D exposure."

The agency also will not seek special review for 2,4-DB and 2,4-DP. While their chemical makeup is similar, 2,4-D and 2,4-DB are not the same. The generic 2,4-D herbicide is marketed under a wide variety of names in various formulations, while 2,4-DB is the active ingredient in Butyrac 200, a soybean and alfalfa herbicide.

Good news for project

EPA's decision to not pursue special review for 2,4-D was good news for ag industry giant Dow AgroSciences, who is currently developing corn hybrids tolerant to the herbicide. Some current hybrids are so sensitive to 2,4-D that certain crop consultants advise against spraying it in growing corn.

Dow AgroSciences hopes to launch 2,4-D-tolerant hybrids by 2012. The company also intends to commercialize 2,4-D-tolerant soybeans by 2014.

By the way, it took the EPA more than a generation to OK this family of herbicides. Actually, the report from the original study that sparked concern about a potential link to cancer was published in 1981. Aren't you glad EPA didn't conclude there was a link to cancer? Otherwise, a whole generation of workers and families could have been at risk while EPA made up its mind.

LibertyLink soybean news

LibertyLink soybeans moved one step closer to reaching farm fields when the European Food Safety Authority issued a positive safety opinion on the technology. Bayer CropScience LLP is currently working with leading soybean-breeding companies to develop high-yielding LibertyLink varieties that

will be ready once the company gets the green light.

So far LibertyLink soybeans are fully approved for food, feed and cultivation in the U.S. and Canada, and for importation into Australia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Taiwan and South Africa. They're also approved for food use in Russia. Bayer CropScience expects full import approval from the European Union and China before soybean varieties are sold here.

This is another technology that has followed a long and curvy road toward the farm. It now appears that long-awaited commercial use of LibertyLink, first introduced by Agrevo in the mid-1990s, might finally be on the horizon.

Find weather on WatchDog

What's smaller than a soda can, yet capable of delivering real-time weather information on wind speed and direction, air temperature, humidity, dew point,

wind chill, and barometric pressure? No, not Superman; he was never this accurate. It's Spectrum Technologies' WatchDog Sprayer Station, with ultrasonic transducers and no moving parts.

Raven Industries reports it has successfully integrated the new weather product into its Viper Pro control system software. The results should be better weather data for making spraying decisions. To learn more, call 815-436-4440 or visit www.specmeters.com.

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2007 U of MO Corn Trial Results

RANK/TECH.	HYBRID	YIELD	LOCATION - TEST
#1 YGCB 2 YR AVG.	0C-213 YGCB	175.0	North Region, Mooresville - Non-Irrigated
#1 RR/YGCB	0C-213 RR/YGCB	181.2	ENTIRE North Region - Non-Irrigated
#1 YGCB	0C-413 YGCB	219.2	Central Region, Laddonia - Irrigated
#1 RR/HX	5H-114 RR/HX	168.5	North/Central, Novelty - New Technology
#2 RR/YGCB	3C-714 RR/YGCB	217.4	Central Region, Laddonia - Irrigated
#3 RR/YGCB	3C-714 RR/YGCB	227.8	ENTIRE Central Region - Irrigated
#1 YGPL	0P-415 YGPL	162.0	North Region, Novelty - Non-Irrigated

2007 U of MO Soybean Trial Results

RANK	VARIETY	YIELD	LOCATION - TEST
#2	NT-7368	69.6	North Region, Macon - Glyphosate Resistant
#2 2-YR AVG.	NT-3909+ RR/SCN	61.9	North Region, Macon - Glyphosate Resistant
#2	NT-3777+ RR/SCN	70.7	North Region, LaGrange - Glyphosate Resistant

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