

For top results, know nozzles inside out

By TOM J. BECHMAN

HITTING the target is what spraying should be all about. Tim Criddle, marketing director for Miller-St. Nazianz Inc., doesn't mince words.

"The whole goal is to hit the target and deliver the herbicide in the droplet size it needs to be," Criddle says. "The sprayer itself is a recreational vehicle.

"The days of going to the field with any kind of nozzle are over. You need a nozzle that delivers droplets at the proper size to the target."



RIGHT-SIZE TIPS: Case IH representatives say Patriot sprayers can be switched from spraying soil-applied herbicides to post herbicides with minimal effort. It may require a change in nozzle type or size.

Key Points

- Weed control boils down to hitting the target evenly, whether it's weeds or soil.
- High-tech nozzles are available and on the rise, but basic types still work, too.
- Even though nozzles last longer today, they do wear out and need replacement.

That's one reason why some customers ask for bodies that hold five nozzles, he says. With five nozzles, either of different size or different type, you can better match conditions.

"You're going to be spraying more expensive herbicides again," he adds. "You want the right nozzle."

Changing times

Mark Lawson suggests you assume that Palmer amaranth is in your field, whether it is or not. The Syngenta agronomist and farmer says you're looking at a preemergence application with at least two modes of action, followed by a postemergence application for grass control in soybeans.

Invasive weeds such as Palmer amaranth are why it's crucial to pick the right herbicide and apply it correctly, Lawson says. "Each plant produces a million seeds," he notes. "If only 30% are viable,



TARGET COUNTS: The single purpose of this sprayer is to deliver spray droplets of the right size at the right rate to the target, explains Tim Criddle, Miller-St. Nazianz.

that's still 300,000 seeds per plant. A half a dozen plants left behind could get a seed bank started. We're going to have to be really good field scouts."

Type and size

You may not want the same tip when applying post chemicals and minimizing drift as when putting on soil-applied products, experts say. One nozzle Apache reps suggest is the AIR air induction nozzle, with extended range. It provides good coverage over the soil with medium droplet size. If you're applying foliar applications, the Twin-Turbo might be a good fit. If you want to apply 20 gallons per acre, consider the Turbo TeeJet nozzle.

Hypro offers a 140-angle flat fan nozzle that delivers even distribution of particles. Tips are available that will deliver from 0.8 to 6 gallons per minute.

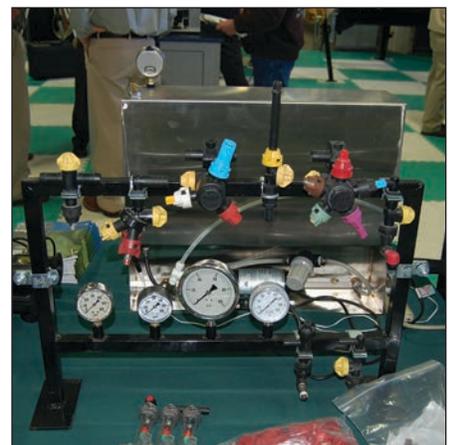
Representatives with Hardi sprayers agree sizing nozzles correctly is the key. They note that the industry has adopted a color-coded standard. Nozzle colors are based on the amount of flow a tip can deliver.

Wear factor

If your sprayer is already equipped with the nozzles you want, check them for wear. Greg Lundquist, Agro-Chem, Wabash, Ind., says poly material used in nozzles today provides excellent length of life. Agro-Chem supplies all types of products for pesticide and fertilizer application.

At some point, however, even today's nozzles no longer deliver a uniform pattern. "I usually ask customers how many acres they've run on a set," Lundquist says. "If they've run 10,000 acres through them, it could be time to change."

To get an indication of wear, stand behind the sprayer, he notes. If you notice streaking, it's likely due to nozzle wear.



WHERE DO YOU START? The choices for nozzles and other equipment may seem overwhelming. Rely on a dealer who understands nozzles and the principles of delivering the right-size droplet at the right rate.



PROPER SPRAY PATTERN: Spray tables like this one help you find a nozzle that delivers the droplet size and distribution you need.



PRESSURE MATTERS: The easy-to-read gauge on this Top Air sprayer from Unverferth makes it simple to monitor whether you're getting the pressure you need at the tip.

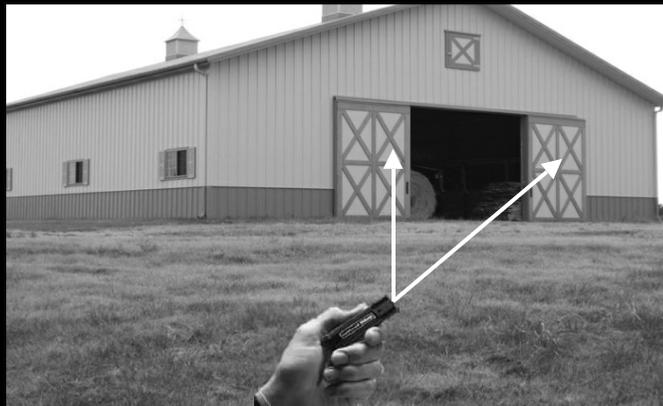


NOZZLE SELECTION: Hardi North America Inc. offers both sprayers and nozzles. Color coding based on the amount of product delivered over a set time helps simplify nozzle selection.

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