

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PESTICIDE

What you need to know to safely and effectively apply a pesticide

By Jess Butler

Everything applicators need to know about applying a pesticide is on the label, but there is a lot of information.

Some people may just add a few glugs of chemical and hope they get the desired effects. This can backfire – not getting rid of the pest targeted AND also possibly damaging or killing what you are trying to protect (and possibly harming yourself or others as well). It also is illegal – the label is a legally binding document by the Environmental Protection Act (EPA).

Let's look at a brief overview of the different parts of a pesticide label and what is in each section.

- Trade name: The name the manufacturer has given the product and will be the biggest name on the label. (Multiple "trade names" can exist for different products containing the same active ingredient.)
- Chemical name: The scientific name of the active ingredient. Active ingredients are ones that prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate a pest – the main ones "doing the job."
- Common name: Many of the chemical names in pesticides are

long and complex, so a common name is assigned for easier understanding.

- Formulation type: This explains the type of formulation the pesticide is, e.g., dust, wettable powder, emulsifiable concentrate.
- Ingredients statement: The applicator will find the percentage of active ingredients and the percentage of inert ingredients. This is very important because many pesticides will have similar trade names, but the amount of active ingredients can often differ.
- Net contents: This section explains how much pesticide is in the container and could be shown as gallons, pounds, etc.
- Name and address of the manufacturer: Every pesticide label contains contact information for the pesticide manufacturer.
- Registration and establishment numbers: Every pesticide must be approved by the EPA before going into production. The numbers verify an applicator is using a legal pesticide, and if using a restricted use pesticide, the numbers are required on an applicator's record.

- Signal words and symbols: This shows the relative toxicity of the pesticide to an applicator. In this section, "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN" will be stated. The relative toxicity is broken into three different categories:

- » DANGER – POISON – A taste to a teaspoon is lethal to a human. (Highly toxic)
- » WARNING – A teaspoon to a tablespoon is lethal to a human. (Moderately toxic)
- » CAUTION – A tablespoon and up to a pint may be lethal to a human. (Low toxicity)

Precautionary statement: This focuses on the precautions an applicator needs to take before handling, applying, or entering an area treated with a pesticide. Topics in this section include first aid, personal protective equipment (PPE), reentry interval (the amount of time that must pass before a person can enter a pesticide-treated area without protective clothing to avoid potential exposure to hazardous levels of pesticide residues), a note to physicians, and covers any environmental hazards an applicator needs to be aware of before making the application.



LABEL!

Directions for use: This section focuses on how to use the pesticide and is generally the longest section on the label. This section will tell the applicator what the pesticide controls, how much pesticide should be used, when to apply, where it is safe to apply, and best application methods. This section also informs the applicator how to store and dispose of the pesticide and container.

Once the label is read and understood, an applicator needs to ensure the equipment used to apply pesticides, generally a sprayer, is in good working order and calibrated so the correct amount of pesticide is used for the job (here's a spray calibration tool – [note, we use the program Bitly to shorten long URLs] <http://bit.ly/sprayer-calibration>). If an applicator has used a pesticide in the past, going over the label again to familiarize oneself with the information is always a good practice and to see if any changes have been made to the label.

If an applicator is having trouble understanding the label, what pesticide is best used, or with calibration – there is help. Contacting a county extension educator or county weed and pest office is always a good place to start. An applicator should be

able to safely and effectively control the pest they are after when everything on the label is understood.

Other references for reading and understanding the label are available through the EPA website at the following:

- <http://bit.ly/whyreadlabel>
- <http://bit.ly/regulatingpesticides>
- <http://bit.ly/protecthousehold>

- www.epa.gov/pesticides/label – Generic label widget. Go to link and scroll over blue text. There will be popup boxes with details.

Details concerning applicator licensing can be found at the University of Wyoming pesticide and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture websites

- <http://uwyoextension.org/psep/>
- <http://bit.ly/wyopesticide>

*Pests at this very moment may be lobbying **Jess Butler** to take them off his desperado list. He is the assistant supervisor at the Converse County Weed and Pest Control District office and can be reached at ccwp@qwestoffice.net.*

