

# Do we *really* need to talk about pesticides *again*?

**Yes, because there is a lot of misinformation out there.**

Pesticides are necessary products for the management of all pests and the safe production of our food.

“Pesticide” is used as an umbrella word to group all products under one category that are used to manage pest populations. For example, herbicides kill plants, insecticides kill insects, fungicides prevent diseases, etc., all of which are pesticides.

There are many different pesticides that control many different and specific pests. All these products, whether synthetically produced or used in organically certified production, are called “pesticides.”

Yep, I said it ... organically produced does not mean pesticide-free.

There is also a segment of the population (30–40 percent) who believe herbicides are not pesticides as noted above. Herbicides are pesticides. All pesticides are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and a federal regulation known as the Federal, Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

FIFRA is a broad-reaching regulation that governs all aspects of pesticide registration, their use, education programs, and personal safety. Guidelines have been created concerning General Use Pesticides (GUPs) and Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs). All pesticides fall into one of these two classifications.

## General Use Pesticides

General Use Pesticides are products that can be purchased by anyone at any location offering them for sale. GUPs include all those products you see in the hardware store available to the public for use in and around their own homes—there are no restrictions on who can purchase or apply them. No restrictions does not mean these products are completely safe for you to handle and apply without taking precautions. They must

be treated with respect. If you do purchase and apply pesticides (including herbicides), you must do so according to the instructions on the product label.

Participating in a pesticide safety education program offered by the University of Wyoming Extension can be beneficial, just so you can become more familiar with the safe use of these products. Finally, you must know how to calibrate your own application equipment to determine the correct application rate.

## Restricted Use Pesticides

Restricted Use Pesticides are those products with use restrictions. These restrictions could be due to their toxicity to humans, invertebrates, or some other environmental concern such as their ability to move through the soil and possibly contaminate groundwater. RUPs have a statement on the label saying they are



restricted use. Anyone who purchases or applies these products must hold a pesticide applicators license issued from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (or a license by the state in which they plan to use the product). There are also recordkeeping requirements when using RUPs.

There are three levels of licensure in Wyoming:

1. **None.** As described above you can purchase and apply any GUP without a license.
2. A **private applicators** license is required if you purchase and apply restricted use products to your own land or land you manage (this is primarily for individuals in agriculture) and do not receive payment for applications.
3. A **commercial applicators** license is required if you receive payment for applications for any product, whether they are GUPs or RUPs. Payment includes salary to perform work duties for a municipality, etc.

A private applicators license is valid for five years in Wyoming. Private applicators can gain their license in multiple ways: attending a UW Extension private applicator program; reading the Core manual and completing a 50-question exam at your local county extension office; and a final option is to complete the take-home workbook, which is based on the Core manual. Due to newer restrictions, this last option of the workbook will only be available for a couple more years.

Wyoming commercial applicators licenses are valid for three years. Licenses can be gained by reading the training manuals and completing exams in the respective categories they wish to be licensed. Licenses will remain valid if applicators complete 24 Continuing Education Units within the three-year term of their license.

For more information concerning pesticides and licensing in Wyoming, please visit the University of Wyoming Pesticide Safety Education Program website [uwyoextension.org/psep](http://uwyoextension.org/psep).

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## Knowing your 'ides' from your ants

- Pesticides include a wide assortment of chemicals with specialized names and functions. They are often grouped according to the type of pest they control:
- Avicides control or repel pest birds.
- Bactericides control bacteria.
- Chemosterilants sterilize insects or pest vertebrates.
- Defoliants cause leaves (foliage) to drop from plants.
- Desiccants promote drying or loss of moisture from plant tissues and insects.
- Disinfectants (antimicrobials) control microorganisms.
- Fungicides control fungi.
- Growth regulators alter the growth or development of a plant or animal.
- Herbicides control weeds.
- Insecticides control insects and related arthropods.
- Miticides (acaricides) control mites.
- Molluscicides control snails and slugs.
- Nematicides control nematodes (roundworms).
- Ovicides destroy eggs.
- Pheromones attract insects.
- Piscicides control pest fish.
- Predicides control predatory vertebrates (for example, coyotes).
- Repellents repel insects, mites, ticks, pest vertebrates, invertebrates, birds, and mammals.
- Rodenticides control rodents.

