

Choose the right pesticide, apply correctly for range and croplands

Grazing tolerance, grazing and residual restrictions, restricted-entry intervals factor into choices



There are specific considerations when choosing and applying herbicides to control weeds on grazing lands.

This article offers information to help you choose an appropriate product and recognize the restrictions that need to be followed for safe use. This article is not intended to recommend specific products – there are literally hundreds of products labeled for weed and pest control in pastures, hay fields, and rangelands.

Grazing tolerance is a necessity

When deciding which pesticides (such as herbicides) to use on a grazing area, look for those that have been evaluated for grazing tolerances. Grazing tolerances specify the period of time that needs to elapse after product application before the area can be grazed again.

Herbicides specifically labeled for pasture, rangeland, and/or meadows will list a grazing tolerance thoroughly evaluated by the EPA. Products without a grazing tolerance indicate they were not assessed for their impact on grazing animals. A herbicide is considered to have “no” or “zero” restrictions if there is no impact to livestock. If there is a specific time period between product application and grazing, it will be listed as a restriction. Essentially, a tolerance indicates it was evaluated by the EPA, and a restriction is the time period assessed based on the tolerance level.

Grazing animals typically include domesticated livestock such as horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. Additional or more stringent restrictions may be in place for animals intended for slaughter or



for lactating dairy animals. Animals or pets, such as chickens, cats, and dogs, may be of concern during pesticide selection. As a general rule, these animals should be excluded from the treatment area until the spray has dried on the foliage.

Restrictions vary depending upon situation

The amount of active ingredient, application rate, application method, and soil type are just a few factors that may affect the length of a grazing restriction. For example, there are varying restrictions with products containing glyphosate. If the application rate of Buccaneer Plus, when used for pasture renovation, is below 3 quarts per acre, there is no grazing restriction on pastures. However, domestic livestock should be removed for eight weeks if the application rate is over 3 quarts per acre.

Do not overlook neighboring livestock when choosing products. Despite best efforts, animals seem to find a way over, through, or under fences. Grazing restrictions also apply to those sneaky animals even if they aren't intended to be grazing that area. Talk with surrounding landowners and managers prior to applying pesticides.

A product can have a **residual restriction** without having a **grazing restriction**. For example, Milestone is specifically labeled for use in grazed areas and has no restrictions on grazing or grass hay harvest following application; however, if animals graze a treated area and are then relocated to a pasture with susceptible plants (broadleaf species), which could be injured by a residual product found in the manure, the animals must graze an untreated area or be in a dry lot for three days before being allowed into the pasture. In addition, there are limitations regarding the movement of hay harvested from a treated field. These residual restrictions are on the product label.

Insecticides are an often-overlooked type of pesticide when considering grazing tolerances. Grasshoppers and alfalfa weevils may be common concerns in alfalfa/grass hay pastures. An example of a haying restriction can be found on the Lorsban label, which has a seven to 21-day grazing and haying restriction in alfalfa fields.

Crop rotation restrictions also occur with certain herbicide applications. Weedmaster and other products containing the active ingredients 2,4-D and dicamba are commonly used to control broadleaf

weeds in pastures. Waiting up to 180 days is recommended before planting another crop if planting certain crops in an area with less than 30 inches of annual precipitation (all of Wyoming). This could affect overseeding bare spots or the section of pasture fenced off for sweet corn.

The **restricted-entry interval** (REI) is another aspect of a label. This time period is relevant to humans rather than livestock. An REI designates the time between an application and when people may enter the field without proper protective equipment. Technically,

a horse can be in the pasture immediately after spraying, yet a person entering the same pasture may be required to wear proper protective equipment, according to federal Worker Protection Standards.

Do I really need to follow the label?

Pesticide labels can be intimidating and seemingly boring, but their importance cannot be overstated. Despite the endless suggestions about grazing restrictions abounding on social media, forums, and word-of-mouth, the product label is the most reliable source of information.

Finding the label from an online source is a way to quickly search for specific information. If using a label not attached to the container, ensure the product in your physical possession matches the online label by matching the EPA registration number.

Graze with confidence

The product label contains information necessary for the safety of animals, hay, and products from pastures and rangeland. Grazing tolerances should be followed as they are intended to protect livestock. Pesticides are effective and safe only when used in accordance with the label.



Pesticide resources, including sprayer calibration

Ensuring proper calibration is one of the most important considerations when applying pesticides. Since grazing tolerances are set based upon the application rate listed on a label, the adage “if some is good, more is better” should be thrown out the window.

If a sprayer is calibrated incorrectly, more product may be applied than planned, negating the EPA-evaluated grazing tolerance (and possibly causing other unintended consequences like harming beneficial plants in pastures). Here are a few guides for calibrating sprayers. Both these, and additional UW pesticide bulletins, are available free at <http://bit.ly/pesticidebulletins>.

Hand sprayers

1/128 method of calibration – Calibrating hand sprayers and high pressure hand guns, MP-124.18,

Boom sprayers

1/128 method of calibration – Calibrating multiple nozzle boom-type sprayers, MP-124.17,

Broadleaf weeds

The Goshen County Weed and Pest Control District has recommended herbicides and suggestions for various broadleaf weeds <http://www.goshenweedandpest.com>.



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