

# GET TO KNOW THE PESTICIDE LABEL

**The active ingredient may be the same, but registered uses often differ.**

Many pesticide active ingredients are “off-patent” and are available from several manufacturers under various brand names. While this trend has increased pesticide options, and in some cases lowered product cost, it also has led to confusion over legal uses because of the various product labels available.

Active ingredients are registered to be in pesticide products. Identification of use sites is part of the *product*—not active ingredient—registration. Thus, products that contain the same active ingredient may not have the same specific uses.

### **An example: diuron**

In Oregon, 20 products containing the active ingredient diuron are registered for weed control in grass seed production. The registered uses and individual labels differ in many aspects.

*Type of label:* There are 11 Section 3 (federal registration) labels and 9 Section 24c (special local need) labels.

*Geographic limitations to use:* Some labels for products containing diuron permit use in grass seed throughout Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Others specify a limited number of counties in which that brand can be used.

*Grass seed crops:* Several labels include use in most grass seed species, while others are limited to a particular species and use (for example, row creation in annual ryegrass).

*Application time:* Some labels state application timing broadly (for example, “spring”). Others specify a particular period, such as October 1 to November 15.

*Crop growth stage:* Some diuron labels are valid only for carbon seeding new grass

crops, some do not limit applications to a particular growth stage, and others are valid only for established crops.

*Application rates:* Diuron application rates differ on

various labels and are influenced by grass species, application time, geographic location, and plant growth stage. Application rates range from 0.4 to 3.2 lb ai/A.

### **Other cases**

Diuron is not alone. Many active ingredients are available under several brand names, which often differ in their labeled uses.

For example, more than 100 brand names contain the active ingredient glyphosate, more than 50 brand names contain the herbicide MCPA, and more than 200 brand names contain 2,4-D.

### **If the active ingredient in several brands is the same, who cares about the brand name?**

You, as the applicator, should care.

The concentration and formulation of active ingredient may differ among products. For example, both the ester and amine forms of 2,4-D are available in various products. Thus, both efficacy and potential for drift can vary among products. In addition, the “inert” or “other ingredients” may vary.

### ***Remember...***

*For “Brand X” herbicide to be used in grass seed, Brand X must be registered for use in grass seed.*

There are several potential negative consequences if you apply a pesticide outside of its labeled use:

- Crop injury or poor pest control may result.
- If you are a commercial applicator, you may be held liable for poor pest control, crop injury, or other factors pertaining to off-label uses.
- An off-label application of a product is illegal, and the applicator may be subject to criminal or civil prosecution.
- If the situation warrants, the crop can be embargoed and destroyed.
- Pest management tools may be withdrawn if used carelessly.

### **What is the best way to avoid confusion about product names?**

The traditional saying still holds true: read the label prior to purchasing or applying any pesticide. **Make sure the crop and use you have in mind are on the particular brand name label.** And, as always, use pesticides safely.

For more information, contact your local Oregon State University Extension agent or the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Pesticides Division (503-986-4635).

*Before purchasing or applying any pesticide,  
make sure the crop and use you have  
in mind are on the brand name label.*

**The label is the law.**

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