Media Release

Monday, September 25, 2006

Spray drift is a major issue in Australian agriculture today. Tighter rotations and intense farming systems coupled with increased diversity, has increased the possibility of off-target damage.

Therefore, when an agricultural chemical is used care needs to be taken to ensure the product selected and/or the way it is applied does not pose a risk to sensitive crops or neighbouring properties.

According to Jorg Kitt, National Adjuvant Manager, Nufarm Ltd, sound drift management is vital in modern agricultural enterprises.

“Nozzle selection is critical and farmers need to choose a nozzle which produces the coarsest spray quality possible without compromising efficacy. Translocated herbicides such as 2,4-D and glyphosate can be effectively sprayed with a COARSE to VERY COARSE spray quality.”

This was the take home message from a number of spraying workshops hosted by Nufarm Ltd since November last year.

Nufarm also suggests that farmers may need to use higher water rates as well as robust chemical rates for smaller targets such as young seedling grasses when applying coarser spray qualities.

More than 350 farmers, contractors and distributors from northern NSW to the Darling Downs were trained at the 20 Spraywise workshops which were aimed at helping farmers equip themselves with the knowledge to greatly reduce drift from any spraying exercises this summer and beyond.

Consultant for Weather Services, Graeme Tepper explained to farmers at the workshops how different weather conditions can be on the ground when compared to those taken in an official Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) weather station.

Mr Tepper said the prevailing weather conditions on the ground could not only be much hotter than BOM reading suggest, but also be affected by soil type, surrounding trees and waterways, and the types of vegetation on the ground, which can all contribute to different micro climates at ground level.

Growers should observe delta T and avoid spraying in situations conducive for temperature inversions. These temperature inversions are more likely to occur at night time,” he said.

Spray application consultant Bill Gordon gave hands on demonstrations at the workshops to show farmers how spray drift is affected by environmental factors, and how spray quality and nozzles are linked.

The workshops also helped farmers to gain a better understanding of how to set up their spraying equipment and the importance of using the correct spray nozzle for the type of chemical being used.

Nufarm is committed to providing Australian farmers with leading edge information on drift management. Growers interested in joining a workshop should contact their local dealer.

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