

Yellow Bristle Grass label claim good news for maize growers

A new label claim for a well known maize herbicide adds a proven, economic option to the arsenal for controlling yellow bristle grass (YBG) in maize crops this season.

Latro® WG, from Nufarm, is now the only nicosulfuron herbicide available in the New Zealand market which is registered for control of YBG in maize.

“This development will be of particular interest to any farmers, growers or contractors who repeatedly crop long term maize ground, particularly in Waikato and Bay of Plenty,” says Nufarm technical specialist Paul Addison.

On farms where YBG makes up 13 percent (on average) of dry matter, the cost of supplementary balage required to maintain milk production is estimated at an annual cost of \$343/ha.

While it has been proven that seeds of YBG will not survive longer than a week in well-sealed maize silage, the harvest, transport and handling of these crops at maturity remains a known risk factor for spreading YBG seed into roadside verges and pastures.

“Once the weed is present on farms, it can be very difficult and time-consuming to eradicate, as well as costly in terms of lost grazing.”

This makes effective YBG control in maize crops not only good practice for biosecurity but also reassuring for farmers who may purchase the resultant silage.

YBG is an aggressive annual-seeding plant which spreads rapidly through pasture, reducing pasture quality. Cows don't willingly eat it, leading to low pasture utilisation. Grazing avoidance leads to rapid re-infestation and an opening for other weeds.

It is widespread throughout Taranaki, Waikato, South Auckland and Bay of Plenty.

Paul Addison says Latro WG is well known as an economic, highly effective post emergence herbicide in maize, with a broad spectrum of control for both grass and broadleaf weeds.

Obtaining a specific label claim for YBG in addition to other common weeds such as a couch, mercer grass, smooth witchgrass, summer grass and barnyard grass, has added another valuable tool to customers' control kit for YBG this season.

Timing of application is important: YBG should be sprayed with Latro WG before the canopy of the crop closes over, to ensure that the herbicide hits its target. YBG itself requires quite high levels of light to thrive, so it tends to be very dominant in the outer rows of the crop, he says.

The recommended application rates for YBG control is 80 g per ha Latro WG with Bonza® at 500 ml per 100 litres of water.

Warm, moist weather conditions and adequate soil moisture, both before and after application, will improve control.

Latro WG can be mixed with Kamba® 500 or Primera® to widen the range of broadleaf weeds controlled, if necessary.

For more detail, talk to your crop advisor or rural retailer.

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