Introducing the Herbicide Ad Hall of Fame

One of the more popular features of this site has been the Herbicide Ad Hall of Shame. The purpose of the Hall of Shame was to ridicule herbicide ads that contradicted Integrated Weed Management principles. The introduction and nearly complete adoption of Roundup Ready crops greatly reduced herbicide advertising, and it has been nearly five years since an ad upset me enough to include in the Hall of Shame.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce a new feature, the Herbicide Ad Hall of Fame. The first entry goes to BASF and their promotion of Herbicide Group numbers to identify herbicide sites of action¹. Most farmers will attempt to manage herbicide resistance by modifying their herbicide programs, and knowing the Herbicide Group numbers of the active ingredients in a product is essential to this practice.

Herbicide Group numbers are nothing new, and this system is commonly used in other parts of the world. I was recently in Canada for a conference, and was impressed with how Herbicide Group numbers are part of the lingo of Canadian farmers. Hopefully Iowa farmers will quickly become as conversant in this terminology as their counterparts to the north.

Approximately 20 years ago when ALS resistant weeds were appearing at a rapid rate, there were efforts to have Herbicide Group numbers placed on herbicide labels. I remember attending a meeting where this was being discussed. A person from industry commented that this would accomplish nothing other than confusing farmers. My thought at the time was that it wouldn’t confuse farmers because the majority would simply ignore the numbers.

In the US, Herbicide Group numbers were kept in the closet until the threat of herbicide resistant weeds became apparent, and now all of the major manufacturers are prominently displaying Group numbers on herbicide labels. It is time for everyone involved in weed management to become familiar with this system of classifying herbicides. I tip my hat to those at BASF responsible for this series of ads.

¹The numbers on the ‘herbicide jugs’ portrayed in the ad represent the Herbicide Group number. Glyphosate (Roundup) is a group 9 herbicide, whereas Sharpen contains saflufenacil, HG 14. Optill PRO is a premix of three a.i.’s, representing HG’s 2,14 and 15.

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