To: Local News
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Alternate Herbicides to Atrazine

Fall or early spring herbicide applications are a great proactive weed management strategy to ensure fields "start clean" at planting, even though additional herbicide applications will be needed for fields to "stay clean" throughout the season.

Some weeds to target with these applications include kochia, marestail, and winter annual weeds such as henbit, weedy brome species, and volunteer wheat. Recommended herbicides for these scenarios include products with postemergence activity and residual herbicides. Recent changes in atrazine labels mean that atrazine cannot be used in some fall-applied scenarios.

Companies that label atrazine-containing herbicides have not renewed 24(c) labels in Kansas that allow for fall applications in row-crop stubble. Fall applications to wheat stubble in a chemical fallow system are still allowed.

Some herbicides with residual activity to consider in place of atrazine in these applications include Group 14 herbicides like sulfentrazone (Authority, others) or flumioxazion (Valor, Panther, others) and Group 15 herbicides like pyroxasulfone (Zidua, Anthem, and others), S-metolachlor (Dual, others), and acetochlor (Harness, Warrant, others). The use of trade names is for clarity to readers and does not imply endorsement of a particular product, nor does exclusion imply non-approval. Always consult the herbicide label for the most current use requirements.

Regardless of which herbicides you apply, the postemergence herbicides will work better when temperatures are warm enough for active weed growth. Daytime temperatures in the 40s would be a good minimum temperature for most applications. Another consideration is that herbicides should not be applied to frozen soil. Be sure to check your herbicide label(s) for application requirements specific to your fields.

Additional information about fall herbicide applications ahead of corn and sorghum can be found in the 2023 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland, K-State publication SRP-1176.

Fall Treatment of Landscape Weeds

Perennials are currently transferring sugar to the roots for storage. These reserves will provide energy for their survival during winter. Perennial weeds, including dandelions, go through the same process. Winter annual weeds such as henbit and chickweed are beginning to pop up and can easily be controlled while they are small. Other perennial weeds and landscapes such as bindweed, Virginia Creeper, and others are best controlled after the first Fall frost.

Fall applications of herbicides, such as 2, 4-D or combination products (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out) that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba, are effective because the chemicals will be moved to the roots along with the sugars. It is important for the plants to be actively growing for herbicides to work.

It is best to apply herbicides when the outdoor temperature is 50 degrees F or higher. Weed Free Zone (also sold under the name of Speed Zone) contains the three active ingredients mentioned above, plus carfentrazone. It will give a quicker response than the other products mentioned especially as the temperature drops below 50 degrees F.