

Follow the label!

Pesticide users should follow the instructions on the product label for several important reasons

Although regulations for pesticide use vary between states and territories, it is important for farmers and other pesticide users to follow the instructions on product labels.

The information on pesticide labels is based on rigorous science and independent assessments and is approved at the national level by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The instructions on the label ensure that the pesticide is effective, safe to use, will not harm the environment and will not pose a risk to trade.

Effectiveness

- All pesticide products have to be tested in scientific trials to prove that they control the weeds, pests or diseases in the crops and situations specified on the label.
- The application rates that give effective pest control are determined scientifically.
- For some situations, the application frequency, methods or equipment are also tested and specified where these are critical.
- Use of pesticides at different rates, or against different pests that are not specified on the label, have not been tested and may not be effective or could pose risks to trade, health or the environment.
- Over-use of the same pesticide, or application at rates other than those on the label, can cause pests to develop resistance to the pesticide, which may quickly become ineffective. All agricultural pesticide labels contain information on how to avoid resistance and CropLife Australia provides detailed guidance on resistance management on its website.

Safety

- All pesticides registered for use in Australia are rigorously tested to ensure they are safe for people, animals, plants and the environment.
- Because people, animals and the environment can be exposed to agricultural chemicals, the risks must be managed and these are addressed on the product labels.
- As long as the instructions on the label are followed, agricultural chemicals are safe to apply to crops, and safe to handle and transport.
- Agricultural pesticides in Australia are among the most tightly regulated chemicals in the world.

Environment

- The risk of potential environmental or off-target impacts, such as spray drift or run-off into waterways, is assessed independently before a pesticide can be marketed, and appropriate risk management instructions are included on the label.
- When applying pesticides, it is important to follow the label instructions to avoid any unintended environmental impacts.

Trade

- Following pesticide label instructions protects export and domestic markets.
- If pesticides are applied to the wrong crop, or at the wrong time or rate, there is a risk that unacceptable residues could end up in produce or in animal feed.
- Food is monitored for pesticide residues to ensure it is safe and pesticides have been used correctly, but if unacceptable residues are found, the food could be banned and the pesticide traced back to the source for corrective action.
- In extreme cases, an entire export market could be closed and Australia's enviable reputation as a supplier of high quality 'clean and green' produce tarnished.

Although there is much information on the labels of agricultural pesticide products, it is the responsibility of all users to read, understand and follow it.

The information on labels is based on rigorous science and independent assessment, and it ensures that the pesticides are effective and safe to use. If all pesticide users follow the label instructions, we can all continue to benefit from sustainable pesticide use.

For further information:

www.croplifeaustralia.org.au