

Press Release



Statement to the Arkansas State Plant Board

Arkansas farmers have been battling yield-impacting pigweed for years. The invasive weed has become resistant to older technology. Soybean and cotton fields across Arkansas were being choked out by pigweed. That started changing this year. With new dicamba tolerant (DT) technology, farmers can once again control pigweed. The result: cleaner fields and greater yields.

The technology came to market after years of research that demonstrated the lower volatility of BASF's Engenia® herbicide. This was reviewed by the EPA and a University of Arkansas weed scientist.

On August 24, the AR Dicamba Task Force voted to recommend a mid April 2018 ban on the use of all dicamba products, including BASF's Engenia herbicide. This was accepted by the Pesticide Committee of the Plant Board even though it is unclear what facts and data led to the selection of this date and if alternatives were considered. The highly restrictive date means farmers in Arkansas can no longer apply Engenia herbicide when it can provide the most effective control of pigweed. That means pigweed will once again take over fields and reduce yields.

Restricting the use of this proven technology is a major step backwards for Arkansas farmers who will be put at a competitive disadvantage to growers in neighboring states. At a time when farmers have razor-thin profit margins, access to a tool like Engenia herbicide that controls pigweed is essential.

The recommendation to ban all dicamba was made without results from this year's season. Investigations are still ongoing –both from BASF and the State of Arkansas –including this Plant Board. The rush to judgement without careful consideration of the results of these investigations as well as historical weather data, growth stage information and actual yield data, is by definition uninformed, arbitrary and more importantly will harm Arkansas farmers.

In some cases, the cause and source of spray particle drift are clear in fields our BASF reps have walked. In other cases, the cause and source are undetermined because there appears to be multiple factors at play, including inversions and the lack of adherence to buffer zones and possible tank contamination.

We are continuing to fully investigate and understand off-target reports. This Board is still investigating. Why the rush to judgement?

Contact your Arkansas State Plant Board member now.

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