



Glyphosate... again

It seems that hardly a week goes by without the media reporting on yet another reaction to the inclusion of glyphosate on the WHO "probable carcinogen" list.

So is glyphosate safe to use?

Well, nothing can be described as "safe", even water, but the European Food Standards Agency has just published an in depth study of glyphosate and concludes that "it is unlikely that glyphosate is carcinogenic". This is the view of all worldwide regulatory agencies, many of which have criticised the WHO for using poor scientific data in their recent analysis.

In April we learned that MEPs were to vote on the re-registration of glyphosate in Europe, so Confor lobbied UK MEPs to stress the importance of the product. We had a good response, with the majority cross party replies indicating support of re-registration, often accompanied by well briefed explanations.

The vote to propose non-registration, organised by the Green Alliance, was taken on 13 April and was not sufficiently supported. MEPs did resolve, however, that the registration should be reduced from 15 years to seven years, and that amateur and amenity use should be excluded.

It should be noted that this vote is purely advisory, as the actual decision will have been made on 18/19 May by the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food & Feed, (SCoPAFF), Phytopharmaceuticals Committee, made up of experts from each Member State.

The Commission is desperate for a definite decision to be made and not delayed, so it is

thought that the regulation proposed will be some form of compromise – my sources suggest a 10 year registration and the exclusion of tallow amine based formulations. The latter would include popular products such as Clinic Ace and Glyphos, but not the popular Monsanto products such as Roundup Pro-Active.

Whatever happens, we will be able to use current products until the current registrations run out on in June 2018.

I'll report on the result in the next FTN.

Bramble, gorse and scrub - Broadshot

Since the loss of Timbrel and Garlon, the only specific scrub killer available in the UK was Broadshot.

Old label Broadshot may continue to be used in non FSC forests, but the new label is approved for grassland only, with no forestry approval. But even had forest approval been granted, it would have been of little value as the rate for knapsacks has been reduced from 20ml/l to 3ml/l – far too low to be effective on any perennial weed.

Consideration had been given to applying for an offlabel approval for a related herbicide containing fluroxypyr, but this is also now not feasible as a knapsack use is either prohibited, or also restricted to an ineffective 3ml/l.

Glyphosate is, of course, very effective on most scrub species (but not gorse) if aided by an effective adjuvant such as Validate. For best results use a high rate of glyphosate (most labels allow up to 9-10l/ha on difficult weeds such as rhododendron), and use a nozzle providing a medium spray such as a DT1.0 (yellow) jet.

Sir David W N Landale KCVO, DL



David Landale died in March this year, just short of his 82nd birthday. He was widely known for his early career in the east with Jardine Matheson following father and grandfather 'taipans' of that great Scots-Chinese trading house, and for his stewardship of the isle of Gigha which led to his being appointed to look after the Duchy of Cornwall estates for which he was made KCVO, and for his founding of the Maggie's Centres in 1995 which now has 20 centres throughout Britain dedicated to caring for cancer sufferers.

But readers of FTN will equally recognise him as one of the leading lights of the forestry sector in the UK, especially Scotland, where he lived on the family estate at Dalswinton. He was chairman of Timber Growers UK Ltd (1985-87) but with a love of his own woodlands, and a deep interest in the success of the sector, he was involved with almost every important development of the industry for several decades.

David played a key supportive and creative role during the process of the merger of Timber Growers Organisation (TGO) and Scottish Woodland Owners Association (SWOA), and the subsequent disposal of SWOA's commercial arm SWOAC Ltd to a management buyout, creating the Scottish Woodlands Ltd of today. And he used his considerable diplomacy to use the Association's surplus funds to establish The Scottish Forestry Trust, which has helped shape forest and processing research and policy in a whole range of areas, both in Scotland and throughout the UK.

David's Chairmanship of the Trust during the 1990s played an essential and influential part in establishing the Trust's pre-eminent position, and it was David's advocacy and creativity that enabled the Trust to contribute the essential funding to establish and develop Cashel Forest on the slopes above Loch Lomond as a major forest education and research centre.

Despite his stature and all his considerable achievements, David Landale was someone you instinctively knew listened to your point of view and could prove to be the gentle and caring friend he was to so many.

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