

The Confor pesticides helpline

Pesticides notebook
by Colin Palmer



It was through a conversation with Jane Karthaus at the APF that the idea of an advisory service over the use of forestry pesticides was initially conceived.

That was some 23 years ago in 1993, and initially the service was jointly run on behalf of the APF, TGA, FCA and the BCTGA. It continues to provide a service for the forestry and Christmas tree sectors and since inception has responded to close to 6000 enquiries.

So what are the main areas discussed? The initial queries can be summarised under some six headings:

- specific weed control
- specific pest and disease control
- pesticide products
- environmental features
- regulatory, operator safety and certification factors
- crop tolerance.

In reality most responses will need to embrace many or even all of these features.

Typical enquiry 1: Control of rushes

For example, one regular question concerns the control of rushes. Simple? Well read on!

The probable solution (other than drainage and liming) is likely to be based on the use of glyphosate. However, while glyphosate may be used in FSC certified woodlands, not all glyphosate products have UK forestry approval, and

there are advisory, and statutory (1m from the top of the bank) requirements for application near to water.

Not all crops will be tolerant, so while summer applications will need to avoid the crop altogether, winter applications over the trees are likely to be only truly tolerated by spruce and pine.

The situation will have to be explored at this juncture - is it pre-planting on a grassland site, or a farm woodland or a replant / upland site. This is relevant as 2,4-D will control soft rushes (pause to explain how to differentiate from hard rush), but only has approval for grassland, and offlabel approval for farm forestry, where it may be considered if there is a desire to retain other grasses.

2,4-D no longer has approval in upland / replant forestry, and is on FCS's "don't use" list.

Finally, the application system is also critical for good control, as rushes have a vertical waxy surface which means that the spray must be on the fine side of medium quality - this often leads to a further discussion on the topic of suitable nozzles, and the need for an appropriate adjuvant. And which adjuvant is likely to perform well without adding an increased operator and environmental burden? There is, of course an alternative option using the weedwiper...

Scrub control

Fortunately not all topics are so labyrinthine, but increasingly we have to jump through externally imposed hoops to find a solution: Typical is the current situation with scrub control now that Timbrel has been revoked. We currently (until September 2016) have a perfectly good one in Broadshot - but cannot use it in FSC certified woodlands, which leaves us with glyphosate only, which is fine on many scrub species includ-

Other hot topics

Bracken control

Asulox has emergency approval which is likely to be annually renewed until a new full approval is ratified.

Warfarin and grey squirrels

The future is not looking good, and last use will have passed by the time you read these notes.

Hylobius

Gazelle or Forester (or Alert). Pros & cons for both, but Gazelle certainly looks promising.

Grass weed control

The options of glyphosate, propyzamide (Kerb) or the graminicides Falcon & Laser are regularly explored - often highlighting the need for accurate grass identification...

Operator certification

The removal of "grandfather rights" in November, guidance on supervision of "trainees", difficulties in sourcing instructors.

Crop tolerance

Particularly use of glyphosate over dormant larch (no), douglas fir (marginal) and broadleaved trees (also no).

ing rhododendron, but it is pretty variable on gorse, rosebay willowherb and Japanese knotweed.

For gorse and rosebay willowherb there is a solution in farm forests where Tomahawk is very effective and not expensive, so perhaps we should consider applying for an off label approval for all forestry use. There does, though, appear to be some mis-information concerning the supply and use of Grazon 90 as an alternative, but this has no approval in woodland of any sort.

MEMBER SERVICES PESTICIDES HELPLINE



If you haven't used the service to date, be assured it is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. Colin can be contacted 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: forestry@branchline.demon.co.uk



Visit the UK's Premier Manufacturer & Supplier of Professional Forestry Equipment

www.FUELWOOD.co.uk

Avesta-Vagnen - Forestry Trailers suitable for ATV's & Small tractors



Fuelwood (Warwick) Ltd | Claywood | Beausale | Warwick | Warwickshire | CV35 7NX

E sales@fuelwood.co.uk T + 44 (0) 1926 484673