



PESTICIDES NOTEBOOK

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Kerb Review

The announcement last autumn by FSC that propyzamide was to be removed from the “highly hazardous” pesticide list came too late for many to include the herbicide in their winter weed control programmes. These notes are aimed to be a reminder of its role for those who had curtailed its use during the HH years.

Kerb is predominantly a grass weed herbicide, although it will also suppress docks, buttercup and many annual weeds. It is applied between October and end January, when winter rainfall can move this mostly insoluble root acting herbicide down to the roots through the top soil profile. As it is a residual herbicide, it may be applied in wet weather, and can be safely applied over all dormant trees whether conifer or broad-leaved species.

So, any downsides?

In comparison with glyphosate it is more expensive - costing up to £40 per sprayed ha, it can also fail on the tougher grasses such as tussocks and calamagrostis, and can be less effective on peaty organic soils. Care also needs to be taken on steep hillsides adjacent to watercourses, as torrential rain can physically displace the herbicide particles.

As well as the well known Kerb Flo, propyzamide is also available for forest use as Careta, Cohort and Relva from mainline forestry companies, plus over 30 parallel imports sourced from the EC which can often be found at discounted prices, and most of which have forest approval.

Hylobius - insecticide update

Concerns over neonicotinoids have resulted in three insecticides being withdrawn for all uses outside of greenhouses. This includes Merit Forest (imidacloprid) which has been used as a forest nursery treatment, but is no longer available.

The position on Gazelle SG (acetamiprid) looks much more favourable, and currently the EC Directorate has no plans to revoke this, as all the published scientific data indicates that it has no adverse effect on bee health. However, MEP's have recently voted to ban all neonicotinoids, including acetamiprid and the popular thiacloprid used for woolly aphid control in Christmas trees. Fortunately, this decision is non binding, creating battle lines between the scientific and political wings of the EU community. So, like Brexit, nothing is set in stone, and therefore steps are being taken to extend the forest approval of an alternative insecticide as an replacement should acetamiprid fall foul of the politicians.

The two synthetic pyrethroid products Forester (cypermethrin), and Alpha 6ED



Brexit and pesticide approval

Confor was recently invited with other land use industries to meet with DEFRA to discuss possible outcomes for UK pesticides post Brexit. These revealed that whatever the outcome of the negotiations, we will be following European procedures during the “transition period” as indicated in the EU Withdrawal Bill.

In 2021 a UK regulatory system, based on EC regulations but combining both UK and EC roles will be put in place. This will introduce a Statutory Register with the intention of a “lighter touch” with an option of developing a shared regulatory approach with the “Quad Countries” - Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, the indications are that Environment Minister Michael Gove will wish to find ways of reducing or minimising the use of pesticides, so we do not anticipate any relaxation in the regulatory system.

An Agricultural White Paper is scheduled for 2019 leading to an Agricultural Bill. Few clues have emerged as to content, but a recent speech by Agriculture

Minister George Eustace provided worrying suggestions that scientific evidence may seem too controversial to utilise, presumably because it may not follow the “green” agenda. It also appears that hazard may be regarded to be more important than risk, which if implemented over motor transport would lead to a ban all vehicle use!

Government policy appears to see pesticides as a short term solution only, and will strongly encourage IPM (Integrated Pest Management) options - an area in which forestry is already well versed in practice. Ministers will encourage, but not fund, research and development into non pesticide solutions including enhanced plant breeding, sterile pest populations and development of pest and disease resistant crops.

However, to conclude on a reassuring note - Ministers continue to consider that glyphosate is safe and supports its use. Let us hope that acetamiprid get the same nod of approval.

(alpha-cypermethrin) currently have expiry dates in 2021 so should be available at for least the next few years. Forester may be used as a top up spray in PEFC certified or uncertified forests, and there is no certification restriction on the use of nursery treated trees with Alpha 6ED. However, other EC regulations may see these products being withdrawn earlier unless these are relaxed in the UK post Brexit.

Considerable research is being undertaken over non-insecticide solutions, and a summary of these can be found in the article on p66 in this edition of FTN.



MEMBER SERVICES
Pesticides helpline

Pesticides helpline 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: branchline@xln.co.uk