

Avoiding Dicamba Drift

From: N.C. Cooperative Extension Agent, Emily Mueller

A number of dicamba drift situations, primarily tobacco and soybean, have been observed in recent days. Crop sensitivity to dicamba varies, but all broadleaf crops are sensitive. Tobacco, soybeans, other beans and peas, sweetpotato, and grapes are extremely sensitive. Cotton, peanuts, and vegetable crops, including peppers, tomato, watermelon, cucumber, cantaloupe, and squash, are somewhat less sensitive, but still highly sensitive. Minute amounts of drift can cause significant injury.

The impact of dicamba drift onto soybeans depends upon the dosage and the growth stage at time of drift. Soybeans hit during the vegetative stage can recover somewhat from dicamba drift; in some cases, yield may not be impacted. Drift occurring during reproductive stages will likely reduce yield.

Any dicamba drift onto tobacco results in a complete crop loss. Tobacco purchasers have consistently stated that tobacco exhibiting symptoms of injury from any non-registered pesticide is not marketable and must be destroyed; that is a significant liability and/or economic impact for growers. Visual injury, even in the absence of detectable residues, is grounds for contracting companies to require crop destruction. A similar situation may exist for vegetables grown under contract.

Applicators must follow all label directions. In the case of the dicamba products registered for Xtend soybeans and XtendFlex cotton, that means following the supplemental labels, the North Carolina Special Local Need labels, and the web sites referred to on the supplemental labels. **Remember, avoiding drift is the responsibility of the applicator.**

Label Requirements and Stewardship Practices

1. **APPROVED PRODUCTS.** Engenia and XtendiMax are the only currently available dicamba-containing products registered for use on Xtend soybean or XtendFlex cotton. Although not completely non-volatile, these formulations are less volatile than non-approved brands. These are the only brands that should be applied to Xtend soybean or XtendFlex cotton.
2. **NOZZLES, PRESSURE, VOLUME.** These three factors determine droplet size and the percentage of droplets that fall in the “driftable fines” category.
 - Use only approved nozzles when applying Engenia or XtendiMax. Refer to the following web sites for approved nozzles:
 - For Engenia: www.engeniatankmix.com
 - For Xtendimax: www.extendimaxapplicationrequirements.com
 - Pressure affects droplet size. Operate within the recommended pressure ranges specified on the web sites.
 - Use a minimum spray volume of 10 GPA; 15 GPA is preferred.
3. **BOOM HEIGHT.** Greater boom heights result in greater drift potential. Keep boom as low as possible and no more than 24 inches above the target.

4. **WIND SPEED.** Drift potential increases with increasing wind speed. North Carolina Special Local Need labels for Engenia and XtendiMax specify a maximum wind speed of 10 MPH.
5. **INVERSIONS.** Thermal inversions are common during early morning hours and late afternoon. Application during an inversion can result in long-distance drift. Very calm winds may indicate an inversion, hence the requirement for a minimum 3 MPH wind during Engenia or Xtendimax application. It is best to apply dicamba between the hours of 9 AM and 4 PM.
6. **WIND DIRECTION.** This is one of the greatest factors affecting off-target deposition. Do not spray if the wind is blowing toward a sensitive crop (if you can't afford to buy that crop, don't spray). Even if the wind is not toward a sensitive crop, use some common sense and do not spray adjacent to a sensitive crop. Remember that wind direction can and does change often during the day. Wind direction should be checked frequently, especially if sensitive crops are nearby.
7. **TRAVEL SPEED.** Greater travel speeds cause turbulence behind the sprayer, and that can lead to more drift. Engenia and XtendiMax labels specify a maximum travel speed of 15 MPH; 10 MPH or slower is preferred.
8. **TANK MIXING.** Tank-mix partners may affect physical properties of the spray solution, leading to a reduction in droplet size. Each tank-mix partner must be tested for its effect on droplet size before it is approved. Use only approved tank mixes as listed on the web sites.
9. **DRIFT REDUCTION AGENTS.** Drift reduction agents (DRA) work by reducing fine droplets. For some tank mixes, a DRA is required; see web sites. If a DRA is not required, it is still a good idea to use one if sensitive crops are nearby.
10. **ADJUVANTS.** Other than DRA's, a number of adjuvants are approved for use with Engenia and XtendiMax; see web sites for approved products. If mixing Engenia or XtendiMax with an approved glyphosate product, additional adjuvants are of questionable value. Do not use AMS or any adjuvant containing AMS; that increases volatility of the dicamba products.

National Association of Wheat Growers: Weekly Update

NAWG Strongly Endorses Steve Censky for Deputy Secretary of USDA

On Thursday, July 13th, Steve Censky, CEO of the American Soybean Association, was nominated by President Donald Trump as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"NAWG extends our congratulations to Steve Censky on his nomination for Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture," stated Chandler Goule, CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers. "His experience as a farmer and vast understanding of agriculture sector make him an ideal candidate for this role."

“I’ve worked with Steve for years and over the last year as a fellow commodity organization CEO. I have seen firsthand his dedication to American agriculture,” stated Goule. “He is an aggressive advocate for farmers and truly understands how important international trade is to the ag economy, and how critical a strong crop insurance program is for farmers to farm another year when they experience a weather or economic storm.”

“NAWG urges the U.S Senate to quickly take up his nomination and confirm his appointment before the August recess.

Senate Committee on Agriculture Hearing “Opportunities in Global and Local Markets, Specialty Crops, and Organics: Perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill”

On Thursday, July 13, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held their sixth hearing on the Farm Bill titled, “Opportunities in Global and Local Markets, Specialty Crops, and Organics: Perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill.” The panel of witnesses consisted of representatives from organic grain companies, organic and specialty crop producers, potato farmers, food distributors working with local markets, and beef and swine producers. Discussion ranged from the inefficiency of the National Organic Program to foreign policies to the need for organic research and grant investment. However, there was one clear priority among the witnesses and that was trade. Specifically, the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMD).

In Chairman Robert’s opening remarks he stressed the necessity of trade and MAP and FMD, citing a specific example involving wheat, “In Egypt, the U.S. Wheat Associates have utilized the Foreign Market Development program to promote U.S. hard red spring wheat to be used as a pasta ingredient. As a result, an Egyptian food and beverage company imported 30,000 metric tons of hard red spring wheat in 2015 and 2016.” Prior to the conclusion of the hearing Senator Roberts spoke of a meeting he had with President Trump a few days prior and expressed his confidence in the future of crop insurance as well as the President’s understanding of the national security concern and trade priority surrounding the Pacific Rim countries.

House Panel Advances FY 2018 Ag Spending Bill

On Wednesday, July 12, 2017, the House Appropriations Committee considered and approved its version of the FY 2018 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which funds the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and the Farm Credit Administration. The bill report includes important language supporting the Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative and the Small Grains Genomic Initiative, both of which have long been wheat research priorities for the wheat industry. The report also includes language encouraging further research into low Falling Numbers as well as the development of a new test. Importantly, the bill also rejects the Trump Administration’s proposed closure of 17 Agriculture Research Service (ARS) facilities. NAWG is concerned, though, about cuts in the bill to the ARS budget of \$37.6 million. Research investments are particularly important given the current conditions wheat farmers across the country are facing.

House Members Send Letter to USTR on Importance of NAFTA

On June 30, 2017, Members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to the USTR highlighting the importance of agriculture in the NAFTA renegotiation. Members from the U.S Senate sent a similar letter to the USTR on June 29, 2017.

U.S. Farm Groups Urge Trump Administration to Not to Restrict Steel, Aluminum Imports

On Tuesday, July 11, 2017, NAWG, along with a broad coalition of farm groups, sent a letter to the Administration urging it to not to restrict imports of steel and aluminum under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. The groups argued that restricting these imports could have the potential for “igniting a trade war” which would prompt other countries to slap duties on U.S. food and agriculture exports. “U.S. agriculture is highly dependent on exports, which means it is particularly vulnerable to retaliation,” the farm groups said in the letter Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross....”Many countries that export steel to the United States are also large importers of U.S. agriculture products. The potential for retaliation from these trading partners is very real.”

Additionally, on July 12, 2017, a group of 15 bipartisan economists who were former chairs of the White House council of Economic Advisers sent a letter to President Trump on the harms of imposing a steel import tariff by using the Section 232.

House Committee on Agriculture: Hearing Advisory

On Wednesday, July 12, the House Committee on Agriculture announced a full committee hearing on “The State of Infrastructure in Rural America” to be held next Wednesday, July 19, 2017. Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11) is quoted as saying, “From broadband and transportation, to energy, water and research, public investment in infrastructure has been vital to the success and stability of our rural communities and has helped American agriculture thrive,” and expressed his interest in hearing ideas from the yet-to-be-revealed witnesses.

National Wheat Yield Contest Spring Wheat Deadline is August 1st!

The National Wheat Yield Contest enrollment is finishing out its last couple of weeks. Entering its second year, the contest is sponsored by the National Wheat Foundation. The Contest is entirely web based and growers can enter at <http://yieldcontest.wheatfoundation.org> . Deadline to enter for spring wheat is August 1, 2017!

Falling Wheat Acres Threaten Stability of Domestic Supply

Wheat acreage in the U.S. is at its lowest level in more than 100 years and that’s bad news for the country’s millers and bakers who depend on stable supplies of the grain, according to a new report from Rabobank.

So far, rising yields have helped offset declining acreage, the report says, but a catastrophe like a major drought could put America’s breadmakers in a bind.

“As the acreage base has continued to shrink year after year, the impact of droughts looms larger since there is less cushion in the case of production problems,” says the report, which focused primarily on hard red winter (HRW) wheat because it is the largest class and especially important to breadmakers. “A lower capacity

for production in this wheat class, based on decreased acreage, increases the probability of weather-related price volatility, driven by supply related issues.”

American farmers are still producing a lot of wheat despite a roughly 40 percent reduction in wheat acres over the past 27 years, according to the report, which puts wheat acreage for the 2017-18 marketing year at about 46 million acres, down from 75 million acres for 1990-91.

Like acreage, production has also dropped. Farmers will produce about 1.8 billion bushels for the 2017-18 marketing year, according to the latest USDA forecast. That, Rabobank says, is down from 2.75 billion bushels for 1990-91.

That’s a major red flag for America’s millers and bakers. The millers need a stable supply of the grain to produce the flour that’s used to bake the loaves of bread, buns, rolls, pasta and other wheatbased items on grocery shelves and restaurant menus.

“We have begun a productive dialogue with all links of the grain chain, from wheat growers to bakers, to develop solutions to improve wheat production and quality, and restore wheat as a commodity that farmers want to grow,” said Robb MacKie, president and CEO of the American Bakers Association.

There may not be much the industry can do immediately about declining acreage, but there is a renewed focus on improving yields and the quality of the U.S. wheat that goes into everything from hamburger buns to spaghetti.

“Bakers have been very concerned about the decline in planted wheat acres over the years, and with this year’s crop being the lowest acreage planted since 1939, wheat quality is a top priority,” MacKie told Agri-Pulse. MacKie leads a coalition called the Grain Chain, which brings together growers, millers, and bakers to address policy issues as a united grain industry.

David Schemm, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, tells Agri-Pulse that much of the planting reduction can be blamed on “unfair trade practices” employed by foreign governments – especially China – that prop up their producers and exports at the expense of U.S. farmers.

“A study last year by Iowa State economists showed that China’s domestic support programs were costing U.S. wheat farmers \$653 million as a result of these incentives stimulating overproduction, driving down world prices,” Schemm said.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative is also focused on China. USTR officials filed two separate complaints with the World Trade Organization last year against China’s support for its agricultural sector.

In September, the USTR launched a trade enforcement action against China over its artificially high prices for wheat, corn and rice. The U.S. said this distorts world markets and causes billions of dollars in losses every year for U.S. farmers and exporters.

As then-President Barack Obama put it: “These unfairly distorted prices on important crops lead to overproduction in China and disadvantage American farmers who export these same crops around the world.”

Three months later, the USTR filed a challenge against China at the WTO for the country’s failure to import enough wheat, corn and rice to meet its tariff rate quotas.

Meanwhile, Schemm, a Kansas wheat farmer, said the Bakers Association is doing what it can to support its members.

“Many wheat farmers are reducing their wheat plantings and switching over to other crops,” Schemm said. “NAWG is focused on how to maximize productivity on the acres that are planted to ensure it continues to be a competitively profitable crop.”

U.S. wheat production and exports are both expected to decline for the 2017-18 marketing year, according to the latest USDA forecast.

NCSGGA Upcoming Events

July 24th / 3:00p -5:00p
4-H Agriculture Science Camp
East Carolina Ag & Education Ctr.
1175 Kingsboro Rd. Rocky Mount

July 27th
Northeast Ag Expo Field Day
R&R Farms
106 Riddick Grove Rd.
Belvidere, NC 27919

August 1st / 10:00am – 12:00pm
Touch a Tractor Event
4020 Market At North Hills St.
Raleigh, NC 27609

August 2nd, 2017
Blacklands Farm Managers Tour
Green Valley Farms
7014 NC-94
Columbia, NC 27925

August 10th - 11th
NCSGGA Board Meeting
Sheraton Imperial Hotel

Durham, NC

September 9th / 2:30pm – 5:00pm

CALS Tailgate

PNC Arena

Raleigh, NC

September 15th / 5:00pm – 8:00pm

Family Fun Night

Mt. Vernon School

Raleigh, NC

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