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DPX 66037, a new tool for weed control in sugarbeet; the European approach.

Introduction:

DPX 66037 triflusaluron-methyl is a selective post-emergence sulfonylurea herbicide for the control of many annual broadleaves and grass weeds in sugarbeet (*Beta vulgaris*) which has been intensively developed in Europe since its discovery in 1988. First registrations of the product have been obtained in 1993 and first commercial sales have started full scale in 1994 in France and Belgium and on limited surfaces in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Product positioning:

The keys of the product positioning of DPX 66037 are : DPX 66037 is the broadest spectrum sugarbeet herbicide active with particular strenghts against several difficult weeds (AETCY, AMARE, BRNN, HELAN, MATSPX, RAPRA, SINAR, GALAP,...). DPX 66037 forms the building block of a program of tank-mix treatments with reduced rates of a range of other herbicides. DPX 66037 is taken through both leaves and roots giving it contact and residual activity. The breakdown characteristics of DPX 66037 mean that it gives appropriate residual weed control in sugarbeet without risk of damage to following crops. DPX 66037 is safe to sugarbeet at any stage of crop growth. It can therefore be used in programs of treatments from emergence to row closure. DPX is used at very low rate (30 g / ha / application) and it is supplied as an easy-to-use, dry flowable formulation in handy-size plastic jars. DPX 66037, in a very specific way, inhibits a plant enzyme which does not exist in animals, fish or insects. It is not classified as hazardous and its use represents a very low risk to the user and the environment. A program based on DPX 66037 will significantly reduce the amount of chemicals applied to the land with current practices.

The challenge for Belgium and France in 1994 was to integrate significantly DPX 66037 at user program level and to bring satisfaction to users for both weed control efficacy and crop safety in a cost effective manner.

The market feedback:

In total 90.000 ha have been treated with DPX 66037 in France and Belgium. This represents 15 % of the planted ha or 6 % of the ha treated in post-emergence. In average, farmers have made 1.4 treatments with DPX 66037 or an average surface of 14 ha. The product was used in mixtures in 92 % of the cases; PMP being present in all the mixes, metamitron in 55 %, chloridazon in 15 % and lenacil in 10 %. The product was mainly used at early crop stages with 40 % of the uses at cotyledon stage and 32 % at the 2-4 leaves stages. All these market elements have shown that DPX66037 has been fully integrated in existing programs and not used as a rescue treatment. The level of user satisfaction has been, for both weed control efficacy and crop safety, more than 85 %. The perceived reasons of such high satisfaction were for 70 % a broad spectrum herbicide, for 15 % crop safety, for 10 % easy to use and for 5 % a low rate herbicide.

Conclusions:

DPX 66037 was launched in French and Belgium market and used on 15 % of the ha planted with no single complaint regarding either weed control efficacy or crop safety. The product was integrated in existing programs, early in the season. In weed control programs DPX 66037 has replaced mainly ethofumesate and clopyralid in tank mix with reduced rates of PMP, metamitron and chloridazon. Market surveys have also revealed a trend to reduce pre-emergence treatments when DPX 66037 was used in the post-programs.