

WSSA Commends EPA and its Final Herbicide Strategy for Endangered Species Act Compliance

Drift reduction adjuvants are now included as a mitigation option in the final strategy

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WESTMINSTER, Colorado – 12 September 2024 – The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) applauds the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for adding drift reduction adjuvants (DRAs) to the agency’s approved mitigation options for Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance. The EPA finalized its Herbicide Strategy on how to meet ESA obligations last month, incorporating suggestions from WSSA and its affiliated Weed Science Societies, along with proposals from the Council of Producers & Distributors of Agrotechnology (CPDA), CropLife America, and the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), among others.

“We’re beyond pleased that the EPA agreed with our recommendations to include drift reducing adjuvants in its final Herbicide Strategy,” says Greg Dahl, WSSA President. “The goal is to protect the endangered species while also enabling the most practical, affordable, and efficient ways to do so. DRAs have shown to be among the best possible spray drift mitigation options in all those important categories.”

The EPA’s final Herbicide Strategy includes more mitigation options compared to an earlier draft, while still protecting listed species. “There is now a better path forward for farmers and land managers to do business and still meet all ESA requirements,” says Dahl. “For example, buffer distances can now be reduced by 15 to 30 percent if applicators use a spray drift reduction adjuvant.”

The final herbicide strategy targets three types of mitigations to protect threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat: spray drift, runoff/erosion, and impacts to species and their habitat at specific geographic locations. The EPA received over 1,000 comments and used them to develop an enhanced list of methods to address downwind spray drift and downslope pesticide runoff/erosion.

“The EPA’s final Herbicide Strategy also makes provisions for additional easy-access training materials and guides to help applicators understand and comply with the requirements to protect endangered species,” says Dahl. “It’s now much more convenient for herbicide applicators to ascertain EPA and ESA soil erosion and runoff distance impacts and their related herbicide application mitigation requirements.”

The EPA has already created a [document](#) to detail how a pesticide applicator might adopt mitigation measures from this strategy when they appear on pesticide labels. These changes will not impact all herbicides immediately, but will appear on labels over the next 15 years. If herbicide applicators adopt these mitigation practices, they can still use an herbicide while all listed species and their habitat remain protected.

To learn more about WSSA and its science policy positions, select this [link](#).

About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit scientific society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Society promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems, and promotes cooperation among weed science organizations across the nation and around the world. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.

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