

Atrazine under EPA Registration Review, Comment Period Open

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By Corrie Bowen

County Extension Agent – Agriculture & Natural Resources

Wharton County

Atrazine is a widely used herbicide that can be applied before and after planting to control broadleaf and grassy weeds. Atrazine is part of the triazine chemical class, which includes simazine and propazine due to their common mechanism of toxicity. It is primarily used in agriculture (with the greatest use on corn, sorghum, and sugarcane). These triazines are also used in Turfgrass production, which is important to this area as most of the turfgrass produced in Texas is produced in Matagorda and Wharton Counties. Atrazine has been a major agricultural herbicide for more than 30 years. It was registered initially in 1958 by CIBA-GEIGY, the manufacturer, for weed control in corn and has been used extensively in the United States since the early 1960's. Atrazine is used primarily on corn, and is the primary pesticide used on corn. Over 65 percent of all corn acreage is treated with atrazine (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 1993).

Three chlorotriazine herbicides (atrazine, simazine, and propazine) are currently under registration review by the EPA. The recently released draft ecological risk assessment (ERA) for atrazine reveals that EPA may attempt to drastically reduce atrazine use due to concerns over its impact to aquatic life, based on studies that were previously disregarded by EPA's scientific advisory panel in 2012 as being flawed. This ERA, along with the ERA's for propazine and simazine, are currently in a comment period. I recommend sharing this with other growers and industry professionals and to encourage them to leave a comment on the importance of atrazine in their operations. A good summary of the implications of this ERA, along with a form letter can be found on the National Sorghum Producer's website at:

<http://sorghumgrowers.com/sorghumalert/>

Restricting or eliminating the use of atrazine in the would have important economic consequences for farmers and consumers. Atrazine is an important herbicide in the production of corn and other crops in the United States. Since atrazine is such an important herbicide, mandatory changes in application strategies are likely to generate sizable costs for producers and consumers. This information finds us all at a very busy time at harvest. The dockets for these ERA's can be found at <https://www.regulations.gov/>

The docket for atrazine is: EPA-HQ-2013-0266. The website shows that the comment period will end on August 5, 2016, however EPA recently announced that they will extend this until

October 4, 2016. I hope all concerned growers and industry professionals can find time to submit comments regarding the registration review of atrazine, simazine, and propazine.