

Both Ground and Aerial Applications of 2,4-D Allowable by Permit beginning September 15, 2022

By Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent
Wharton County

On August 23rd, the Texas Department of Agriculture granted the suspension of a rule regarding the application dates of 2,4-D in Wharton County – Section 7.53(o)(2) of the special provisions for Wharton County of the Texas Pesticide Laws and Regulations. The temporary suspension granted by TDA allowed for the **ground** application of 2,4-D and 2,4-D containing herbicides by permit on the west side of the Colorado River in Wharton County beginning **Thursday, September 15, 2022**. Ground applications of 2,4-D on the east side of the Colorado River in Wharton County are already permissible under rule 7.53(o)(1). This was announced in a previous news release the week of August 23rd.

Per the August 23rd suspension, the aerial application of 2,4-D in Wharton county continued to be prohibited until September 15th on the east side of the Colorado River and until October 1st on the West side of the Colorado River. However, between August 23rd and September 12th, stakeholders (farmers and pesticide applicators) expressed a need to the Wharton County Commissioners Court to allow aerial applications of 2,4-D beginning September 15, 2022 on the west side of the Colorado River in Wharton County. On September 12, 2022 the Wharton County Commissioners Court approved to send a rule suspension request to the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) requesting to allow the aerial application of 2,4-D on the west side of the Colorado River in Wharton County. TDA approved that rule suspension request on September 13, 2022. This means that aerial applications of 2,4-D can be made fifteen days earlier (September 15th instead of October 1st) than the law states for the west side of the Colorado River in Wharton County.

As a result of the two suspension requests recently granted, both the ground and aerial application of 2,4-D are permissible on the West Side of the Colorado River beginning September 15, 2022. The recent suspension requests do not change anything on the east side of the Colorado River. Ground applications of 2,4-D on the east side of the Colorado River in Wharton County are already permissible under rule 7.53(o)(1), and aerial applications are already permissible on the east side of the river on September 15th. These suspensions granted are temporary rule suspensions, and they are not for permanent rule changes.

All other applicable rules for Wharton County continue in effect. Pesticide applicators are urged to pay special attention to 7.53(o)(4) “In no case shall 2,4-D be used to treat any area that is nearer than two miles to any susceptible crop”. There are still susceptible crops present in Wharton County. I will alert all applicators to the fact that late crop soybeans, 2nd crop rice, fall vegetable crops, and plant nurseries are all susceptible to 2,4-D. Soybean research has showed 0 to 30+% yield loss depending on soybean type (herbicide traits) and rate/timing, and subsequent weather conditions.. 1/10 of a dose rate can cause 5-20% yield loss for all soybean types. Reproductive stages R1/R2 are the most sensitive time for all soybean types. Stem twisting and leaf strapping are common symptoms of 2,4-D damage to soybeans. 2,4-D can cause delayed flowering and delayed maturity in soybeans. Rice damage from 2,4-D is usually characterized by leaf rolling, erect panicle habit, failure of heads to emerge, reduction in kernels per head, and a delay of maturity. 2,4-D damage to rice is generally greater at more sensitive rice growth stages such as germination and reproductive stages of plant growth.

Note in rule 7.50 (b) (3) that the use of any turbine or blower-type ground application equipment to apply regulated herbicides is prohibited.

Also, in a regulated county such as Wharton County, no person shall spray regulated herbicides (2,4-D, dicamba, MCPA, or quinclorac) when the wind velocity exceeds 10 miles per hour or as specified on the product label, if the label is more restrictive. Regulated Herbicide Spray Permit applications are available at the Wharton Co. Extension Office, or by logging-on at

<http://texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/forms/PEST/Applicator/spraypermitq820.pdf>

TDA Pesticide license holders are required to submit a regulated herbicide spray permit when 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPA, or quinclorac will be sprayed in a regulated county. The submission of the regulated spray permit pertains to 2,4-D, but also when spraying dicamba, MCPA, or quinclorac in Wharton County. Completed Regulated Herbicide Spray Permit applications can be faxed to the TDA Regional Office in Houston at (888) 223-5606.