

NEWS RELEASE

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MDA reminds farmers to help protect water quality by following pesticide labels

ST. PAUL, Minn. - With spring fieldwork in high gear, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) reminds all agricultural professionals about the importance of observing legally required pesticide application setbacks to protect state water resources.

“Minnesota farmers understand the importance of doing our part to protect our natural resources, and that includes following setback requirements,” MDA Commissioner Gene Hugoson said. “Many products have setback requirements, so it is important to carefully read the pesticide product label before using a product.”

Atrazine, and pre-packaged or tank mixes containing atrazine, carry label-specific application setback requirements. These application setback requirements are measured as the distance between a sensitive area and the area of application. Legal requirements include a 66-foot application setback from the area where field runoff enters streams, rivers and certain types of tile inlets, a 200-foot setback from lakes and reservoirs, and a 50-foot setback from wells (including irrigation wells) or sinkholes.

Some insecticide products used to control soybean aphid require both a 10-foot vegetative filter strip, and an application setback of 25 feet for ground applications or 150 feet for aerial applications near surface waters.

Weed and pest control might be difficult in areas where effective products cannot be used. If corn or soybeans are planted near surface water, sinkholes or wells, use of certain pesticide products may be prohibited. Options in these areas include not applying products that carry such restrictions, not cropping these areas, or using alternative products that do not carry application setback or filter strip requirements.

Carefully reading labels and working with an ag professional or chemical dealer can resolve the selection of weed and pest control products. Commercial applicators responsible for pesticide applications must follow label requirements and cannot be expected to apply products in areas where such use is a violation of the label.

In addition to any label requirements for application setbacks and vegetative filter strips, the MDA strongly encourages adoption of voluntary Best Management Practices for use of all agricultural herbicides, especially when using products containing acetochlor, alachlor, atrazine, metolachlor and metribuzin. Also, growers and applicators should be aware that Minnesota shoreland rules are being revised by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. These rules require agricultural land within specified distances of public waters to be maintained in permanent vegetation or operated under an approved conservation plan (Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6120). Contact your county zoning administrator for details.

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This release is available on the MDA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us>

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