



PESTICIDE APPLICATION

DEFINITION

•Pesticides (including insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides) are used to control and reduce the damage done to plants by pests, insects, and weeds. They contain a variety of chemicals and are used in a variety of applications.

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DETAILS

- Pesticides are applied to crops by aerial spraying, topsoil application (granular, dust or liquid formulations, spread using truck or tractor-mounted equipment), soil injection, soil incorporation, or irrigation.
- For herbicide application, the majority of growers apply their own, using tractors with enclosed cabs, but some is applied by aircraft, using small planes with enclosed cockpits and GPS systems.
- For insecticide application, farmers use both self and custom application methods with an almost even split of ground and aerial methods.
- The Texas Pesticide Law requires that a person may not use a restricted-use or state-limited-use pesticides or regulated herbicides unless licensed or certified by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Additionally, applicators are to keep records of pesticide applications for two years. Commercial applicators are required to have insurance and register their pesticide equipment. (There are currently approximately 3,000 licensed pest control applicators in Texas).
- According to the EPA, pesticides are the last line of defense and are used only when pest levels are causing sufficient damage to offset the expense of the application. They suggest to never start an application if a significant weather event such as rainfall is forecast; the rainfall may cause drift or soil runoff at the application site. Pesticide application just before rainfall or irrigation may result in reduced efficacy if the pesticide is washed off the target crop, resulting in the need to reapply the pesticide.
- Pesticide application to cotton is 3 to 5 times greater per hectare compared to other crops.

STORY IDEAS

- Interview local farmers about their pesticide application methods
- Contact your local Extension office or the Texas Department of Agriculture for pesticide application tips for local farmers.
- Interview specialists about pesticide contamination issues and preventative measures in your area.

IMPACT

- According to the 2002 farm census, 27,709 farms in Texas treated their crops for insects.
- From those 27,709 farms, 7,230,112 acres were treated to control insects.
- Of all insecticides used globally each year, the estimated amount used on traditional cotton equals 25%.
- In 1995, the Texas Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that \$376 million dollars was spent by Texas farmers on pesticides, herbicides and their application.
- Currently in the U.S., approximately 8 to 10 years and \$100 million to develop a new pesticide for cotton. However, it takes approximately only 5 to 6 years for weevils and pests to develop an immunity to a new pesticide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

•Please see the CottonLink Contact Directory, to find pesticide specialists, extension agents and specialists, and other cotton organizations representatives for pesticide and application information.

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