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A media release from

Late Crop Herbicide Application (crop topping) on Barley



The use of approved herbicides for the purposes of weed control must be carried out in accordance with herbicide labelling instructions, which require grain growers to follow written label directions. Barley Australia wishes to make clear that glyphosate is not registered for late season application on barley in Australia and as such does not condone its usage in this way.

It should also be understood that major brewers strongly oppose the use of herbicides that are not registered for use late in the season and have advised that they will not knowingly purchase malt made from barley that has been crop-topped with glyphosate.

Results of limited studies conducted on trials of glyphosate crop topped barley are inconclusive as to whether or not there is a negative impact on the germination of barley under Australian environmental and storage conditions, its malting quality or downstream brewing and fermentation processes, and/or whether they may cause undesirable off-flavours in finished beer.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that the continued access to key export markets for Australian malting and feed barley may be threatened if widespread adoption of the practice produces residues which exceed current export market limits.

Whilst Barley Australia recognizes the potential agronomic benefit that glyphosate may provide, particularly in controlling ergot of ryegrass in some Australian barley production areas, research work is still required to be undertaken in many areas.

Barley Australia therefore maintains that glyphosate should not be used or permitted for crop topping purposes until a clearer understanding is obtained of its impact on barley storability under Australian conditions, its malting and brewing impacts, and of residue limits which are yet to be determined and/or implemented by some key export market countries. Barley Australia supports efforts being undertaken by the National Working Party on Grain Protection to establish a scientific review of the impact of glyphosate on barley at all stages.

In the interim, Barley Australia urges growers to respect the labelling instructions in relation to the use of glyphosate for late crop application. Furthermore, Barley Australia advises that some barley receivers, marketers and end users have indicated that more rigorous testing of barley delivered into storages from the upcoming 2016 crop may be conducted.

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