

Message

From: CHAMBERS, JOHN A [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=152092]
Sent: 10/11/2016 3:22:11 PM
To: OZIMKIEWICZ, JENNIFER A [AG/1000] [jennifer.a.ozimkiewicz@monsanto.com]
Subject: FW: disease impact vs drift impact--north delta

FYI

From: MORGAN, RANCE E [AG/1000]
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 2:49 PM
To: CHAMBERS, JOHN A [AG/1000]
Subject: FW: disease impact vs drift impact--north delta

From: MORGAN, RANCE E [AG/1000]
Sent: Friday, October 07, 2016 9:44 AM
To: LEBLANC, CHAD [AG/1000]
Subject: FW: disease impact vs drift impact--north delta

From: GANANN, LARRY W [AG/1000]
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 9:20 PM
To: MOSKAL, ALLISON [AG/1000]
Cc: MONTGOMERY, ROBERT F [AG/1000]; MILLS, ANTHONY [AG/1000]; MORGAN, RANCE E [AG/1000]
Subject: disease impact vs drift impact--north delta

I'm sure some of you have seen articles like the one below.

Given the yield losses attributable to very high disease pressures in some areas, it will be very easy for the drift impact story to be confounded with the disease issues.

I'm not sure how we will be able to separate the two, but we need to make sure disease impact is not overlooked in the conversation around drift.

Suspected dicamba damage begins to come into focus for Bootheel soy farmers

- [By Bryce Gray St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#)

[Bryce Gray](#)

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- Sep 24, 2016

Worries about this year's soybean harvest in the Missouri Bootheel are no longer just projections. They're reality.

As the harvest gets underway, some farmers in the state's southeastern corner are beginning to get a better understanding of the financial losses they face from crop damage believed to be caused by illegal use of unauthorized or "off-label" varieties of the herbicide dicamba.

Though harvest won't reach its peak until early to mid-October, initial indications paint a painful picture for yields.

Mark Beaird, a soybean farmer near Parma, Mo., has harvested roughly a quarter of his 1,500 acres so far. In those areas, he says he's lost about a third of his crop compared to past yields, mustering 40-odd bushels per acre in fields that normally produce 65 to 75 an acre.

With soybeans able to fetch close to \$10 per bushel, Beaird says his losses approach \$250 an acre. Multiply that by the nearly 400 acres harvested at this point and Beaird's financial shortfall is just shy of six figures already, with more losses expected to follow.

"I'm scared to get into the numbers, really," Beaird said. "We're gonna be out a lot of money, I know that. And we started off with about as perfect a season as you can start off with."

But things took a turn for the worse in late June and July, when complaints of crop damage skyrocketed across the Bootheel. In just over a one-month stretch, more than 100 incidents of suspected herbicide drift were reported from four Bootheel counties alone, surpassing the usual statewide total for an entire year.

The cases, which remain under investigation by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, are thought by many to have been triggered by widespread, illegal usage of dicamba.

The herbicide is highly volatile, especially in hot weather, tending to vaporize into a gas and drift across wide areas. For non-GMO soybeans and other crops, contact with even low concentrations of dicamba can be harmful. Soybean leaves, for instance, can become cupped and yellow after dicamba exposure. Meanwhile, Missouri's largest peach farm, situated in the area, may lose half its trees to similar leaf damage from suspected drift.

Though the herbicide is not new, it seems to have gained newfound popularity after this year's release of dicamba-resistant soybeans — known as Roundup Ready 2 Xtend soybeans — by Creve Coeur-based seed company Monsanto.

But Monsanto's form of dicamba meant to be applied to Xtend seeds was not released, as it has yet to be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The unreleased dicamba variety would supposedly be less volatile, but many believe its absence led some growers with dicamba-resistant crops to spray older, "off-label" forms of the herbicide, leaving their fields unharmed but jeopardizing others.

Subtitles

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Captions

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Chapters

- Chapters

Even though clear warnings forbid use of unauthorized dicamba substitutes, Beaird believes that rule-breaking was inevitable, especially with insufficient fines in place for wrongdoers.

“I think the seed company is partially responsible because they put the seed out there without the chemical,” Beaird said. “It’s like putting the carrot in front of the horse’s nose.”

Things may improve slightly for Beaird going forward. The early plantings he’s already harvested are the ones that he says got hit the worst, catching multiple “whiffs” of drift, while other beans may have only been affected once or twice.

He says this year’s crop damage didn’t just hurt his yields, but also caused him to spend more time and money than ever before on weed control.

“When dicamba hit the beans they just about stopped growing,” said Beaird, explaining that the slowed growth meant they couldn’t shade out weeds. “The next thing you know you got another crop of weeds you wouldn’t have had.”

Beaird is not alone. Other soybean farmers are reporting similar, or even worse, crop losses. And many yet to harvest are nervously waiting to learn the price tag associated with their own damage.

“They’re definitely damaged, I just don’t know to what extent,” said Ted Rouse, another area soybean farmer. “Until I get ’em threshed, I won’t have a whole lot of information.”

Insurance companies have indicated that they won’t compensate farmers for losses from illegal herbicide usage. And while many are preparing for lawsuits to recover damages, Beaird worries that legal disputes won’t be resolved in time to save some farmers from going out of business this year.

Looking ahead to next year, Beaird says he’ll have to hedge his bets and switch to dicamba-resistant seeds. He says he needs assurance that he won’t be a victim of suspected dicamba use again as he tries to work toward retirement.

“When you get my age, you’re trying to get money together so you can quit,” says Beaird, who turns 56 next month. “I worked this year for nothing, put it that way.”

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