KUTSAGA™
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DEAR GROWER

SOME SUCKER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

TOPPING

Topping which is the removal of the terminal bud or inflorescence of the tobacco plant to inhibit flowering of the crop is an important procedure as it significantly increases the weight, size and uniformity of the tobacco leaf. However, the removal of the terminal bud, stimulates the growth and proliferation of suckers (Axillary shoots) because hormones that inhibit sucker development are produced in the terminal bud, so removal of the terminal bud also removes apical dominance, thus inducing proliferation of suckers.

If suckers are not removed, plants will develop multiple suckers. Therefore, sucker control significantly increases crop yield, improves grade quality, increases reducing sugars, nitrogen content as well as nicotine content in tobacco cured-leaf. These properties augment flavor and quality of the golden leaf. Furthermore, sucker control reduces aphid and whitefly pest buildup on the crop as extra foliage for breeding will have been discarded.

SOME SUCKER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

Sucker control in tobacco can be done through manual hand-suckering or chemical control using suckercides. Currently, three suckercides (active ingredients) are available on market and these include N-Decanol, Flumetralin and Pelargonic acid. The number of applications approaches for acceptable chemical sucker control varies widely. Table 1 below gives applications rates for the various suckercides.

Suckercides should be applied over the top of the stem and should reach every leaf axil of the plant but not the soil. Suckers larger than 2 cm will not be controlled chemically, therefore they should be removed manually. Growers must note that suckercides should not be applied when plants are wet from rain or dew and when they are badly wilted. If applied under such conditions the control period is likely to be less or may result in phytotoxicity. It is not recommended to apply suckercides when reaping has commenced, this is done in order to reduce residue accumulation on the cured leaf

TABLE1. REGISTERED SUCKERCIDES AND DISTRIBUTORS FOR USE IN TOBACCO PRODUCTION.

Suckercide (Active Ingredient)	Formulation	Distributor	Amount applied/100L
CONTACT SUCKERCIDES			
N-Decanol 79EC	N-Decanol 79EC	TSA	4 Litres
	N-Decanol	CP Chemicals	4 Litres
	Thekanol	Fercochem	4 Litres
	N-Decanol	Magchem	4 Litres
	Sucker-Tac	Polachem	4 Litres
	N-Decanol	Cropserve	4 Litres
	Avi N-Decanol	Fercochem	4 Litres
	N-Decanol 79 EC	Optimum Agro	4 Litres
Pelargonic Acid	*Beloukha	Pivotal Agro	0.75 Litres

LOCALLY SYSTEMIC & CONTACT SUCKERCIDES

#Flumetralin 125EC	Primal 125 EC	Fercochem	2.7 Litres
	Defeat 125EC	Cropserve	2.7 Litres
	Topper 12.5 EC	Polachem	2.7 Litres
Flumetralin 150EC	Flumetralin 150 EC	Optimum Agro	2.25 Litres
	Flumex 150 EC	Cropserve	2.25 Litres
	FluPro 150 EC	Bancella	2.25 Litres
Flumetralin 250EC	Prime+ 250 EC	Syngenta	1.35 Litres
Locally systemic and contact suckercides			
Flumetralin +N- Decanol	Flumetralin Duo	Magchem	3 Litres

*BELOUKHA IS APPLIED IN COMBINATION WITH A SYSTEMIC SUCKERCIDE FLUMETRALIN.

FLUMETRALIN IS PERSISTENT IN SOIL AND EXTRA CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO MINIMISE SOIL RESIDUE WHEN USING THIS PRODUCT.

Should there be any queries regarding the above, or if further information on a particular product is required, please feel free to contact

Kutsaga Research Station's Crop Production & Molecular Technologies and Plant Health Services Divisions on telephone (0242) 2575 289-94 or toll-free, 0800 4511 or Email: kutsaga@kutsaga.co.zw

or visit Kutsaga Research Station, Airport Ring Road, Harare

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