



TOBACCO RESEARCH BOARD

KUTSAGA

TELEPHONE: (263 - 24) 2575 289-94
VOIP 0868 800 2604
E-MAIL: tobres@kutsaga.co.zw
www.kutsaga.co.zw

P.O. BOX 1909
HARARE
ZIMBABWE

*Please address all
correspondence to
the Chief Executive Officer*

17 October 2022

Dear Grower

USE TRB TESTED AND APPROPRIATELY REGISTERED TOBACCO AGROCHEMICALS ONLY!

By Dr Susan Dimbi, Executive Director – Research & Extension



It is extremely important that agrochemical use in any agricultural system is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner. The judicious use of agricultural chemicals is of paramount importance as this safeguards human and environmental health and enables sustainable production practices. In the case of tobacco, well over 90% of the tobacco leaf produced in Zimbabwean is sold on the international market, and thus has to meet certain recommended international standards, including that there are no unacceptable levels of pesticide residues on the leaf.

Therefore, tobacco best management practices and good agricultural practices have to be adopted as routine production requirements for the Zimbabwean tobacco crop to enable its international acceptance.

Agrochemical Approval

In order to ensure adherence to the recommended international standards, the Tobacco Research Board is mandated by the Tobacco Marketing and Levy Act [Chapter 18:20] to test and approve pesticides for use on tobacco. This is to ensure that pesticides are effective at the recommended rates and that the levels of pesticide residues on the leaf are within the acceptable limits. Section 65 of the Tobacco Marketing and Levy Act explicitly states that: ***"No person shall treat any tobacco with a remedy which is not registered nor reap or offer for sale any tobacco treated with a non-registered remedy"***, and Section 66 states that: ***"any tobacco so treated will be destroyed without compensation to the grower"***.

To fulfill this requirement, the Tobacco Research Board operates the Pesticide Approval Scheme Service (PASS), an objective, impartial and internationally acceptable pesticide screening and countenancing scheme to ensure that only appropriate, safe and effective agrochemicals are used on tobacco.

The TRB therefore works closely with suppliers of tobacco agrochemicals as they are required to have all products destined for use on tobacco, brought in for testing and prior approval before being availed to growers. Annually, well over 100 agrochemicals that include new active ingredients, products from new sources and new formulations are screened to ensure they are effective and fit for use on tobacco. After testing, information on the recommended rates and proper timing of application of all tobacco agrochemicals is availed. This information ensures that all crop protection agents are applied at the minimum effective dosage rate, at an appropriate time of application and with the best and safest method of application, thus maximizing their effect. Additionally, it ensures that minimal quantities of pesticide residues are left on the cured tobacco leaf.

At the end of the testing process, agrochemicals that suit the set criteria are issued with a "TRB Number" as proof that they have been tested. It is standard practice that growers always look out for this number on the pesticide label, before purchasing any product for use on their crop.

Latest Developments in agrochemical use

In the last decade, the tobacco industry worldwide, has seen many effective and once widely used agrochemicals being banned, phased-out, or their use on tobacco being heavily restricted to ensure safety of the environment and the user. Zimbabwe has dropped from the list of approved agrochemicals a number of once effective products due to residue issues or due to their highly

hazardous nature. Table 1 below shows the list of agrochemicals that have been withdrawn from use on tobacco in Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Some of the agrochemicals no longer acceptable for use on tobacco in Zimbabwe

Active Ingredient	Type		Active Ingredient	Type
Aldicarb	Nematicide		Dimethenamid	Herbicide
Acephate	Insecticide		Metolachlor	Herbicide
Fenvalerate	Insecticide		Trifluralin	Herbicide
Methamidophos	Insecticide		Butralin	Growth Regulant
Monocrotophos	Insecticide		Benomyl	Fungicide
Thiodicarb	Insecticide		Pendimethalin	Suckercide
Methomyl	Insecticide			
Chlorpyrifos	Insecticide			
Alachlor	Herbicide			

Potential consequences of using unapproved agrochemicals

- i. Unacceptable levels of residues on the leaf – in an environment where sustainable practices are strongly encouraged, this puts the international acceptance of the Zimbabwean crop in jeopardy.
- ii. Phytotoxicity – this is common in cases where improper rates and/or when new unapproved formulations are used. Cases of 90% crop losses to phytotoxicity have been reported when unapproved agrochemicals have been used.



Fig 1 : Some of the phytotoxicity symptoms resulting from use of pesticides in a manner not approved by the TRB.

Tobacco growers are therefore strongly advised to only use, approved and registered agrochemicals on their crops. To ensure that the grower has the latest information on the status of agrochemicals, the TRB issues updates on the registration status of tobacco agrochemicals, annually. Furthermore, reminders are issued out quarterly. This information is also available on the TRB website (www.kutsaga.co.zw), on all TRB's social media platforms and can be e-mailed to stakeholders upon request. Additionally, growers can access this information at all tobacco seed selling points and at the TRB desks at the tobacco auction floors.