

## Control requires caution

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partially funded through government programs, is now receiving a less enthusiastic welcome from various state agencies, farmers, and related organizations.

At a meeting held in the Red Rose City's Farm and Home Center this week, the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Service co-hosted an educational meeting along with Dow Chemical Company, manufacturers of a herbicide specifically designed for the control of certain plants, including the multiflora rose.

The thorny bush has been creeping up in some pastures along southern tier counties and is considered to be a nuisance. The battle against the controversial bush began in West Virginia when livestock producers applied pressure to political groups to bring about a program to control the plant. Successful in their bid, the movement has now spread to neighboring states. Southwestern Pennsylvania counties, where the topography and farming industry is similar to that of West Virginia, are reportedly showing the most interest in adopting a program which would control the thorny vegetation.

Spokesmen for Dow, who were on hand at Wednesday's meeting at the Farm and Home Center, provided specific information on the chemical - Tordon 10-K - which is regarded to be very effective in controlling multiflora rose, yet poses potential threats against other plants.

Senior Lancaster County Agent Max Smith, while recognizing the problem posed by the multiflora rose, expresses concern that the chemical to control it be used properly. Don Baldwin, marketing specialist for Dow, agrees with the caution, noting that "our major concern is on product stewardship . . . use it safely, use it right, or please don't buy it," he advised. "We want to start with the highest level of competence in distributing and applying Tordon," he said, which is why his company is setting up training schools in areas where the product has been cleared for use. It was recently cleared for limited use in Pennsylvania; Tordon 10-K carries a restricted label, and is likely to be available within the very near future. The Extension Service wishes to take the responsibility of training potential users and urges those interested in using Tordon 10-K to contact their office.

Both Smith and spokesmen from Dow stressed that Tordon 10-K could pose potential dangers for crops such as potatoes, soybeans, tomatoes, tobacco, clover and alfalfa. It is practically harmless to animals unless absorbed in large amounts, but a real killer of plant life if used incorrectly. To illustrate just how deadly the chemical can be to certain plants, Baldwin pointed out that just a half gram of the material spread over an acre of a tobacco field would be enough to have the crop show signs of effect.

The Dow people developed the chemical for control of certain noxious weeds in certain rangelands, fence rows, and pastures. Procedures have been developed which should make safe use possible, but the safety factor cannot be overemphasized. The manure from animals which grazed on the treated fields, for example, will spread the chemical. It passes through their bodies virtually unchanged. Therefore it is extremely important that manure from these animals be returned to the area where they grazed. This could develop to be a real problem for farmers who collect their manure in huge storage areas and can't possibly spread the all of the excreta on fields where the Tordon 10-K originated. This is one reason why Smith urges potential users to do all they can to avoid contamination of any areas which aren't to be treated. Tordon 10-K could also be spread through ponds and streams, especially if they are sources of irrigation water.

Fields and other land areas treated with Tordon 10-K should not be planted to field crops, even though some crops aren't actually harmed by the residue. Some crops

such as tobacco and potatoes are highly sensitive to Tordon 10-K and would not grow, but others such as corn, would. However, a user who plants corn in a field which has been treated with Tordon 10-K would be stepping outside of the bounds of Tordon's legal limits of use. The government has set a legal limit of "zero" for Tordon residue in corn. Cattle may graze on treated areas, and there is a small tolerance of Tordon in milk, but manure from those animals should be returned to originally treated fields.

While the multiflora rose is now considered to be a thorn in land-use management, it is still being distributed to those individuals who wish to plant the bush. The plant was, in fact, once recommended for planting by both the ASC and ASCS offices. Distribution has now been limited or even discontinued, although the Pennsylvania Game Commission still makes the multiflora rose available to those who request it. Please see their side of the story under a separate heading beginning on page 1.

The multiflora rose bush is not new to Pennsylvania, but the product to control it is. It was recently approved for limited use in the Keystone State and criteria are printed on a special Pennsylvania label. Like all labels, Dow regards the printed matter on the side of the container as a legal document. The company stresses proper use of all chemicals. Pointing out repeatedly that toxicology to plants is what users really have to worry about when applying Tordon, Dow spokesmen note with some satisfaction that the product causes no adverse effects on animals. The label, they point out, carries only a "caution" - the lowest level of warning.

Tordon 10-K is recommended to be applied at a rate of 40 pounds per acre. Dow spokesmen quickly add, however, that such a rate would apply only in a few cases since growths of multiflora rose and other bushes are not likely to cover entire acres. A more practical rule of thumb for amount to be applied might be: one ounce per 10-foot diameter multiflora rose bush. The Extension Service and ASC offices offer their guidance in making calculations and whether certain areas are safe for treatment.

The control of the multiflora rose bush has received positive endorsements from the Pennsylvania Farmers Association, the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, and the Pennsylvania Grange. The ASCS has agreed to go on a cost-sharing program with those who wish to control multiflora rose bushes, but it's noted that funds are limited and in some cases even non-existent. The multiflora rose control project is not statewide, however. Also, it is for pasture management only. ASCS will accept a cost sharing program not to exceed the 50 per cent mark, and not including the cost of application.

Specific details on the application of Tordon are available from the Extension Office and inscribed on the label. It should be noted that the reading of the label will not constitute "training" for use of the product.

Smith informed LANCASTER FARMING that his office, in cooperation with the ASC people, is lining up several educational meetings late this summer to acquaint potential users with Tordon's merits as well as possible hazards. He also points out that there is no cost-share program available in Lancaster County. The program is voluntary.

"I hope that distributors (of Tordon 10-K) would be very careful to whom they sell," Smith warned. He's hopeful that a program can be worked out whereby a potential user will have to show proof of training before he may purchase the herbicide. Smith's reason for concern is due to the fact that Lancaster County and neighboring areas are markedly different from western Pennsylvania and West Virginia where the battle against multiflora rose first took root. This is not primarily grazing land for sheep and cattle. With much cropland in this area, some dangers of contamination exist through either water run-off, irrigation, and manure transfer.

Tordon 10-K is soluble in water which is both good and bad. It's beneficial if a gentle rain follows to wash the chemical into treated soil. It's harmful if a downpour comes along and carries the pellets into nearby streams and ponds. It was therefore repeatedly stated that applicators should be extremely cautious and that the chemical should be kept a half-mile away from ponds and streams. Tordon is

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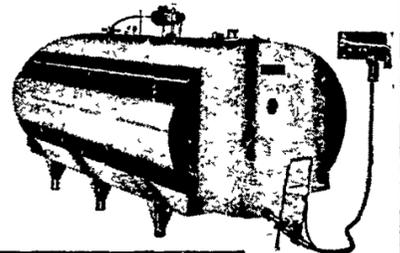
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