

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105

July 15, 2008

MORE STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF HORMONAL HERBICIDE RESTRICTIONS PROMISED

For More Information Contact: Jack Carson (405) 522-4575

Oklahoma City—State Secretary of Agriculture, Terry Peach, said today that he is directing Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry field inspectors to step up surveillance of herbicide applicators—including farmers—in southwestern Oklahoma to prevent further harm to cotton in five counties.

“Yesterday I traveled to the Altus area and saw firsthand the significant damage cotton growers have incurred due to improperly applied hormonal herbicides,” he said. “It is clear that some chemical applicators have not respected the cut-off date for applying these chemicals and we will take steps to stop this illegal activity.”

ODAFF inspectors will begin taking tank samples from pesticide applicators to make sure that they do not contain the banned products, Peach said. Aerial surveillance will also be used to locate damaged fields and to assess where the chemicals might have come from.

“Our investigations into damage from 2,4-D and other hormonal chemicals are not only going to be more thorough than ever, we are going to increase the intensity of our inspections,” he said. “It appears that people are violating the law in some areas and we are going to issue violations when we find who they are.”

2,4-D and other hormonal herbicides are extremely valuable to hay producers and livestock owners for treating broadleaf weeds in meadows and pastures. Peach said rules agreed to by various segments of the agricultural industry set a cut-off date of May 1 for the use of these herbicides in Greer, Harmon, Kiowa, Jackson and Tillman counties.

The chemicals can once again be used beginning October 15 each year.

Cotton is extremely susceptible to damage by these herbicides and growers have reported increased losses this year.

Any applicator or producer having questions about the rules or specific questions regarding restricted chemicals can contact their OSU County Extension office or ODAFF personnel at 405-522-6347 or 405-522-5981. A list of herbicides regulated under these rules is posted on the ODAFF website at www.oda.state.ok.us under “Sensitive Crop Viewer.”

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