



ASSOCIATION OF VETERINARY AND CROP ASSOCIATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA
VERENIGING VAN DIEREGESONDHEIDS- EN PLANTBESKERMINGSVERENIGINGS VAN SUID-AFRIKA
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MEDIA STATEMENT

AVCASA CONDEMS AERIAL APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES CLOSE TO A SCHOOL IN MARBLEHALL

2 MARCH 2009

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE

STARTS

Aerial application of glyphosate close to a school in Marblehall earlier in February enraged parents and other members of the public. The herbicide was applied to control weeds in cash crops fields bordering the school grounds after heavy rains precluded application by tractor and boom spray. Although the pilot ensured that no glyphosate was sprayed over the school grounds or buildings, members of the public and parents are nevertheless enraged about the incident.

Glyphosate is a non-selective systemic herbicide which is widely used for general weed control in agriculture. Its toxicity to human beings is very low and generally symptoms of glyphosate toxicity will only appear if a concentrated form of the product is swallowed. Skin contact with a spray mixture will not have any adverse effect on people. Despite these mild characteristics of glyphosate, AVCASA cannot condone the aerial application of this product anywhere close to a school where children are present.

It is imperative that both farmers and aerial applicators acquaint themselves with sensitive areas around crop fields before commencing with aerial application of any pesticides or other foliar treatments. Schools, neighbourhoods, water bodies, public places, adjacent crops that may be sensitive to pesticides that are to be applied and livestock in kraals, grazing, dairies and feedlots are amongst other some of the areas that are regarded as sensitive for aerial application. Such areas have to be avoided at all costs irrespective of the urgency to apply pesticides. It is unethical and irresponsible to apply any pesticides irrespective of toxicity onto or close to such sensitive areas. An AVCASA task team has recently reviewed a new SANS code on aerial application of pesticides and introduced some stringent measures to ensure that people and the environment are not at risk of being exposed to pesticide contamination.

AVCASA furthermore advises the agricultural community and aerial applicators that it is their responsibility to strictly adhere to the label instructions when doing aerial pesticide application. AVCASA and its member organizations cannot stress enough how important it is to follow the label instructions of pesticides. Doing anything else than that stated on the label is considered to be a serious offense and is punishable with heavy penalties. AVCASA will not defend illegal, off-label and unethical practices with pesticides and welcomes the prosecution of those individuals who do

make themselves guilty of such practices. AVCASA and its members will not supply agrochemicals to individuals who jeopardize the image of agriculture by misusing pesticide or acting unethical when applying pesticides.

Once the refined SANS code for aerial application of pesticides has been promulgated AVCASA will widely publicize this as the only standard by which aerial application of pesticides should be conducted.

For further information please contact:

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ENDS