



## Tip of the Month

June 2017

### **I only want to stock one adjuvant in my depot!**

We so often hear this statement made about adjuvants. It is true that there are commercial issues involved in carrying stock of multiple adjuvant products, but it is a dangerous practice to use a “one adjuvant suits all situations” approach. In the discussion below, the dangers of this practice will be described in more detail.

#### Adjuvant development

South Africa has one of the most stringent adjuvant registration processes in the world, including many first-world countries! Whether we agree with this or not, the bottom line is that all adjuvants that are used with pesticides should be registered and have an L-number. Adjuvant labels have specific and general recommendations with pesticides. If using an adjuvant that hasn't been tested with a particular pesticide or group of pesticides, you may run the risk of using an adjuvant that is not the most effective choice for that particular situation. One adjuvant may be the best performer with a specific pesticide where it may be less effective with another. A “one adjuvant suits all situations” approach, especially if untested, is risky in the pesticide industry.

#### Specific pesticides have specific limitations

Each pesticide has certain limitations and some of these limitations may be overcome by adjuvants. For example, if a herbicide is applied on difficult to control weeds, one may need a surfactant or oil-containing adjuvant to aid in the absorption processes through the waxy layers on the leaf surface. If a sticker was the only adjuvant in your depot at the time, the herbicide may never reach its full potential. The weed control may be adequate under optimal

conditions, but once the conditions are less conducive for herbicide absorption, the sticker may be less effective. The opposite is obviously also true when using a surfactant when a sticker would have been the most effective option.

#### Multiple ingredient products are not always the answer

Many adjuvants claim to have various properties such as water-conditioning, spreading, penetration and maybe even some other properties. Although multiple component adjuvants have their rightful place, one must always ask the question whether they have the properties that are required for a specific situation. For example, when applying a systemic fungicide on row crops, both spreading of spray droplets and absorption are extremely important. If using a multiple function adjuvant, one must ask the question whether the adjuvant has enough ingredients to give it adequate spreading and absorption properties. Remember, the important thing is not the amount of active ingredients that the adjuvant contains, but rather if the required properties are supplied in adequate amounts.

#### Villa recommendation

Adjuvant technology is developing rapidly. However, there is still no silver bullet adjuvant that can be used for all situations. One still needs a few types of adjuvants in the depot to apply all pesticides effectively.

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