



Tip of the Month

February 2018

CHANGE THE ADJUVANT CULTURE

Adjuvants have been used extensively for many years in South Africa. However, there is often still a negative attitude towards these products, which could lead to misinformed decisions. We so often hear that poor efficacy is blamed on the adjuvant. An even more disturbing trend is to blame adjuvants for crop damage, when many other factors are involved. We need to change the adjuvant culture so that we appreciate the value of these, often misunderstood products. If we fail to do this, the negative image of adjuvants will persist and we will continue not to use them, or will purchase these products solely on price.

We can learn from the American growers who have embraced effective adjuvants to increase pest control. This is the reason why the USA is regarded as the worldwide leader in adjuvant technology. However, please be warned that this only applies to quality, registered adjuvants. If using the incorrect adjuvant, things can go terribly wrong!

Pesticide efficacy

Pesticide efficacy may be reduced by numerous factors. These include poor application techniques, weather conditions, soil conditions, antagonistic tank mixtures etc. However, if an adjuvant is part of the spray mixture, we so often hear that the adjuvant gets the blame for the poor efficacy. One must always consider all the factors involved and not just focus on one component in the spray tank. However, many unregistered and incorrect adjuvant choices are often made. In these cases, the incorrect adjuvant could contribute to poor efficacy.

Please ensure that the correct adjuvant is selected for a specific pesticide application. If this is not done, the adjuvant will become part of the problem, and not part of the solution, as it should be. Correct adjuvant choice will increase and stabilise pesticide efficacy over various environments, water sources and even in certain tank mixtures.

Crop damage

Crop damage may occur for numerous reasons, including the incorrect rate of pesticide, incorrect application techniques, poor weather conditions, incompatible and antagonistic tank mixtures and various others. However, there is a trend in South Africa to blame the adjuvant. Often, there are four or five components in the tank mixture together with poor environmental conditions and incorrect application techniques, but strangely enough the adjuvant may ultimately get the blame!

Premium quality, registered adjuvants, are rarely the culprits when it comes to crop damage. However, there is a flipside to this coin. Incorrect adjuvant selection can limit the amount of active ingredient that is absorbed and can also reduce the absorption rate of pesticides. The longer the pesticide spends on the leaf surface and is not absorbed, the more chance of chemical burn. Please choose a correct and registered adjuvant, and the chance of a pesticide induced crop scorch, will be reduced.

Villa's stance

Correct adjuvant selection will rarely contribute to poor efficacy or crop damage. These two issues can normally be attributed to human error or suboptimal environmental conditions. However, just a very important word of caution. Incorrect adjuvant selection, which normally includes unregistered or non-recommended products, could well contribute to poor pest control and possible crop damage. This occurs frequently because of a reduced pesticide absorption rate and a subsequent scorch on the leaf surface. Please adhere to label recommendations and don't use products that may be antagonistic.

Contact **Brian de Villiers**
for more information on
adjuvants and water quality
082 880 0974 or
bdevilliers@villacrop.co.za