

THE USE OF UNREGISTERED AGROCHEMICALS IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY



FOR AGROCHEMICALS TO BE LEGALLY USED IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY THEY MUST BE REGISTERED IN TERMS OF THE FERTILIZERS, FARM FEEDS, AGRICULTURAL REMEDIES AND STOCK REMEDIES ACT No. 36 OF 1947. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE ACT STATES THAT:

“No person shall for reward or in the course of any industry, trade or business use, or recommend the use of, any agricultural remedy or stock remedy for a purpose or in a manner other than that specified on the label on a container thereof or described on such container”

It is thus illegal for a product to be used in any way other than specified on the label. While a product may well be registered in terms of the Act, unless its use on sugarcane is specified on the label, it cannot be used legally on this crop.

It is an aim of the Act to protect the end user of a product. Specifying the conditions under which an agrochemical can be used gives the user confidence that the

product has been shown to be capable of doing what is specified on the label, and this will have the support of the company that produced it. In addition, besides efficacy standards, the product will also have met a range of safety and quality standards.

Besides the legal aspects of agrochemical use, there are other problems associated with the use of unregistered products. There are good reasons why a product may not be registered for use on a particular crop. These include:

Poor efficacy

A product may simply not be effective against the problems of a particular crop.

Environmental risk


The product may pose an unacceptable risk to the environment.

Pest resistance

There may be products with the same active ingredient already registered for use on a crop. Use of additional products with a similar active ingredient may increase the risk of resistance developing.

Residues

An analysis of residues in a crop may show these to be unacceptably high.

Besides the above concerns around the use of unregistered products, there is also a potential risk to reputation where lax control on product use is perceived. So, from a legal risk perspective as well as stewardship, growers must only use products specifically registered for use on sugarcane. 

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