



Current Report

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Pesticide Use Policy for Conservation Use Acreage - (PIK Program)

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Current Issue

The Federal government through the USDA has announced the details of a payment-in-kind (PIK) program for the 1983 crops of wheat, corn, grain sorghum, cotton and rice. The PIK program is a land diversion program designed to bring supplies of certain agricultural commodities more in line with demand. The government will offer growers an amount of commodity for reducing the acreage planned for growing that same commodity by a larger amount than called for under previously announced acreage reduction and land diversion programs.

The Environmental Protection Agency has received a number of inquiries as to the Agency's position regarding pesticide use in the PIK conservation use areas. The PIK program is only the most recent of several ongoing federal acreage reduction and land diversion programs which result in increased conservation use acreage, and it is unique primarily in the means of payment. For the sake of uniformity and consistency in dealing with pesticide use in these areas, this fact sheet is intended to address pesticide use on all conservation use acreage regardless of the specific federal program involved.

Background

The following characteristics of the acreage reduction and land diversion programs may influence pesticide use decisions.

1. There is nothing in the various acreage reduction or land diversion programs directly addressing pesticide use other than indicating that herbicides may be used for weed control.
2. There is a requirement that both weed control and erosion control must be maintained in the conservation use areas.
3. The number of acres and location of the conservation use acres on the farm may be changed from one growing season to the next.
4. The land itself must either be planted to a vegetative covercrop or be left with previous crop residue or stubble on the soil surface to control erosion.

This information comes from a fact sheet written by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency dealing with their policy on pesticides used on land in the PIK program.

5. Conservation use areas planted to vegetative cover crops can be grazed except during the six principal growing months of the year.
6. Wheat that has already been planted prior to participation in the program can be grazed or used for hay, but not harvested for grain.

The following terms are defined solely for purposes of this fact sheet.

1. conservation use acreage (area) - agricultural land taken out of customary crop production as part of a federal government price support program (eg., acreage reduction, land diversion or PIK) and upon which certain soil or water conservation practices are required; formerly referred to as set-aside acreage.
2. cropland - those agricultural areas which may or may not be tilled, but are intended for row crops, field crops, pastures, rangelands, orchards, groves, vineyards or other such sites utilized for production of agricultural commodities; and those agricultural areas which may or may not be tilled, but are left fallow, planted to vegetative cover crop or are considered conservation use acreage.
3. noncropland - includes, but is not limited to sites such as roadways, parking lots, utility substations, tank farms, lumberyards, utility right of ways, forests, woodlots, fencerows, animal holding pens, shelterbelts, lawns, ditchbanks, irrigation canals, ponds and streams.
4. pesticides - include herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, nematocides, rodenticides, plant regu-

lators and all other pesticides under purview of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended.

5. subsequent crop - that crop planted into the conservation use acreage following withdrawal of that acreage from the price support program.

The Agency's concern in this matter is that without additional guidance a grower participating in the PIK or other price support programs may inadvertently elect to apply to the conservation use acreage a pesticide which could potentially affect the pesticide residues in a crop being grazed or converted to hay and/or the residues in a subsequent crop. Such pesticide residues could contribute to illegal residues or illegal residue levels in raw agricultural commodities, meat, meat by-products, milk or eggs.

EPA Position

Since the conservation use land has been used for crops and most likely will be used as such again after an undefined period (as short as one growing season), it should be regarded as cropland. Even if only crop residue from a previous crop remains without a vegetative covercrop, the area should be considered as idle agricultural cropland. Only if the acreage is changed permanently to noncrop use should it be considered noncropland. Noncropland uses would inadvisably allow use of soil sterilants, "soil sterilant" dosage rates of crop herbicides or other persistent pesticides which could adversely affect subsequent crops and/or cause illegal residues in raw agricultural commodities, meat, milk or eggs. In addition, noncrop use pesticide labeling does not address crop rotation.

The Agency will allow the following types of pesticide application(s) to conservation use agricultural acreages:

1. If the field contains stubble or crop residue from a previous crop on the soil surface and is without a vegetative covercrop, the Agency will allow use, according to accepted labeling, of pesticides:
 - a. registered for "fallow" applications;
 - b. registered for "minimum till" or "no-till" application prior to planting the subsequent crop;
 - c. registered for application to the crop whose residue or stubble is present as if that residue or stubble were actually growing (eg., on corn stubble or corn residue any pesticide registered for use on corn may be applied);
 - d. registered for use on the subsequent crop; or
 - e. not registered for the existing residue or stubble crop as in c., nor for the subsequent crop as in d., but whose label does not prohibit rotation to the subsequent crop.

In all cases under 1. above, applications must be made in accordance with all label use directions, precautions, limitations and restrictions, especially dosage rates, application timing and crop rotation restrictions. Since rotational restrictions (or lack thereof) for the pesticide applied to conservation use acreage may dictate that certain crops may or may not follow this application within a specified time frame, the options under 1. above assume that the grower has planned for the subsequent crop and selected a compatible pesticide.

2. If the field contains wheat or a vegetative cover crop either of which may be grazed or the

wheat cut for hay at the grower's choosing, all pesticide applications must follow the specific use directions, precautions and restrictions applicable to that crop. Such labels already contain grazing and crop rotation restrictions as appropriate. Even though the existing pesticide labels either state or assume that the crop will be harvested, such harvest may not be allowed under the price support program. Pesticide application in the conservation use areas should proceed according to the registered label just as if the crop were to be harvested in the usual fashion.

HERBICIDES FOR WEED CONTROL ON SET-ASIDE ACREAGES

If this land is left idle and contains crop residue or stubble on the soil surface, there are two types of programs available to you. One is to use a residual type herbicide that will control weeds as they germinate throughout the summer. Herbicides available for this purpose are discussed in the Fact Sheets listed below for each crop. If weeds are up and growing when the first application is made, a knock-down chemical must be added to the residual herbicide.

The second chemical method is to use postemergence type herbicides that kill weeds that are up and growing with repeat treatments whenever needed. Most of these herbicides will kill weeds best when they are small. These are also discussed in the Fact Sheets.

This is also an excellent time to kill out the root systems of perennial weeds such as bindweed, horsenettle or johnsongrass.

Fact Sheets on Weed Control

Weed Control in Agronomic Crops - 1983	Fact Sheet 2751
Johnsongrass Control in Oklahoma	Fact Sheet 2753
Bindweed Control in Oklahoma	Fact Sheet 2755
Chemical Weed Control in Cotton	Fact Sheet 2762
Weed Control in Grain Sorghum	Fact Sheet 2763
Weed Control in Winter Wheat	Fact Sheet 2770
Herbicides in Lo-Till Wheat Production	Current Report 2775

INSECTICIDES FOR USE ON SET-ASIDE ACREAGES

The use of insecticides on set-aside acreages does not pose the potential problems that occur with herbicide use, since "carryover" residues of insecticides, if any from one crop to the next, do not have a damaging effect on either germination or growth of the following crop.

However, there may be an increased insecticide use on acreage where

residues or stubble are allowed. Certain soil insects such as false wireworms and white grubs are more apt to occur under lo-till conditions because these insects are attracted to fields with higher amounts of residues. In the case of wheat, insects occurring on the foliar part of the plants, such as the greenbug, fall armyworm, and Hessian fly, could increase if volunteer wheat is not controlled.

FACT SHEETS ON INSECT CONTROL

Cotton Insect Control	Fact Sheet 7162
Soybean Insect Survey and Control in Oklahoma	Fact Sheet 7167
Insects on Small Grains and Their Control	Fact Sheet 7176