

Pre-Harvest Intervals: Cutting Viewed as Harvest in the Eyes of EPA (Monday, 08/25/11)
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(Photo by Scott Bauer; USDA ARS)

High early season precipitation in MT has resulted in some late season weed concerns in many small grain fields. In addition, late season emergence of insect pests such as grasshoppers, English Grain Aphids and/or grasshoppers have also been reported late in the season in certain areas of Montana. Each scenario has producers and applicators facing difficult late season spray decisions.

The decision to apply a pesticide should always consider when a producer intends on harvesting the crop. Inversely, prior to harvesting a crop one should consider previous applications of pesticides. In either scenario consideration should be given to the pre-harvest interval (PHI) of the pesticide products used. The PHI is defined as the period of time after the application of a pesticide during which the harvest of that crop is prohibited.

PHI's are necessary to ensure the crop commodity will not exceed established pesticide residue tolerances. A tolerance establishes the maximum pesticide residue that is legally acceptable on a crop commodity, animal feed or food. The producer that hauls a commodity which exceeds tolerance levels to a grain elevator is liable.

Some common pesticide products used on wheat and associated PHI's (non-forage):

Active Ingredients	Products	Pre-Harvest Intervals (wheat; grain)
Glyphosate	Roundup Ultra Max	7 days
Beta-cyfluthrin	Baythroid XL	30 days
Chlorpyrifos	Lorsban, Nufos, Nufos	28 days
Carbaryl	Sevin	21 days
Lambda cyhalothrin	Warrior II, Silencer	30 days
Methomyl	Lannate	7 days
Methyl Parathion Cheminova	Methyl 4EC	15 days
Zeta Cypermethrin	Mustang Max EC	14 days
Fenbuconazole	Enable 2F	35 days
Azoxystrobin	Heritage	45 days
Propiconazole	Tilt	30 days

Cutting wheat and not baling/harvesting until much later is often viewed as an acceptable way to delay harvest and meet the PHI. **This is UNTRUE!** EPA defines harvest, as the term “reap”, and reap is further defined as the “cutting” of the crop, or when the plant “ceases to be a living organism”. Cutting a crop is considered harvest. This interpretation by the EPA allows the pesticide enough time to degrade naturally while allowing the plant enough time to degrade the pesticide metabolically.

Pre-harvest Intervals, pre-grazing intervals, and pre-slaughter intervals can be found on the pesticide product label under the “*directions for use*” section.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: See the online EPA Label Review Manual at www.epa.gov/oppfead1/labeling/lrm/ or see the Pesticide Fact Sheet #427 at <http://wsprod.colostate.edu/cwis79/FactSheets/Sheets/427HarvestIs.pdf>. For questions regarding this article contact the MSU Pesticide Education Program (Cecil Tharp, 406-994-5067, ctharp@montana.edu).