



Media Release

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CLOPYRALID HERBICIDE TO BE TAKEN OFF THE RETAIL MARKET

Weedkillers containing the herbicide clopyralid will be taken off the retail market from 19 August 2008, the Environmental Risk Management Authority has decided. However, they will still be available for agricultural weed control and commercial turf management use.

ERMA New Zealand Hazardous Substances General Manager Andrea Eng says the decision was made by the Authority following an application by the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development to have clopyralid taken off the market.

Ms Eng says clopyralid has been found in a number of products used to control broad-leaved weeds in lawns, sports grounds, golf courses, field crops and forests.

“It is an effective substance and poses little threat to humans when used correctly, but it is very persistent in the environment, and can damage plants grown in composted grass clippings from lawns treated with it. However, turf managers at sports fields find it particularly useful against prickly weeds and clover, and because of its low toxicity, fields can be returned to use quickly.”

The applicant sought to have clopyralid banned after they found that domestic use of clopyralid on lawns was affecting composting operations by local bodies and private companies.

At a hearing on 20 June, the Christchurch City Council told the Authority that despite efforts to separate clopyralid contaminated clippings, some still found their way into the compost and affected its marketability.

A committee of the Authority concluded that the domestic use of clopyralid on lawns could contaminate compost manufactured from material that had previously been treated with it.

The Authority’s decision means that clopyralid products will only be available for sale for use in agricultural and commercial applications. The conditions of sale and use also require persons buying and using the products to be qualified as Approved Handlers under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act. Mandatory labelling of products would warn against composting contaminated clippings.

Ms Eng says commercial operators will still be able to use clopyralid-based products as they usually have their own means of disposing of clippings outside of the composting stream. Such products will also only be used by trained people who know how to use them safely.

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