

Controlling Grasshoppers

By Marty Morgan, Wise County Ag Agent

Well I heard someone use the G word the other day and realized it's that time of year where we may start seeing grasshoppers emerge in our pastures, hayfields, lawns and gardens. I know, it seems like there is always something we have to treat for when it comes to farming, ranching, gardening and around the home. We have many insects and worms that can do some major damage to all of the above if not controlled in a timely manner. How bad will the grasshoppers be this year you ask? Who knows is my answer, but, we need to be prepared to start battling them so we can get on top of controlling them and reduce populations. Sometimes when the weather is warm and humid the natural enemies of grasshoppers like Fungus, Protozoa and Nematodes help control their populations are all forms of biological controls. Mechanical and Cultural controls are other options that rarely work in my opinion, but hey it might for you. The control option that most everyone is forced to resign to at some point in time, is the chemical option. I know, nowadays the word chemical has become a cuss word so we use the term insecticides, and somehow that makes it better. Well, whatever floats your boat. Insecticides should be used properly according to the Label directions and as we always say "the label is the law". When label directions are followed and the proper equipment and clothing are used you will be protected. So now let's talk about some of these insecticides that work in different applications.

The Ole standby's, Seven and Malathion, still lead the pack in effective control and as the most economical, plus there are no grazing, mowing or haying restrictions with these two! If you use them on your garden or fruit trees then make sure and wash the fruit good and you will be fine. Some prefer to use Seven on their lawn and gardens because it is the safest for their children and pets and it doesn't stink like malathion. I agree and it is the safest and most economical in my book.

For crops, pasture and rangeland, again Seven and Malathion work great, and so do products with Lambda-Cyhalothrin and all three are very economical to use. Other products like Prevathon® and Coragen® (with RYNAXYPYR®) Chlorantraniliprole at 5% and 18% respectively and are great products with the longest residual of up to 21 plus days, but it can be expensive at \$15-22/acre. Prevathon® is an acceptable systemic pesticide for grasshopper control with minimal impact on other beneficial insects. Besiege® is another product that has Chlorantraniliprole³ at 9.26% but also has Lambda-cyhalothrin at 4.63% added to it. Do not exceed the total allowed amount of products per acre per year of any of these products. If you want a good growth regulator try using Dimilin®. Dimilin must be applied when grasshoppers are about 1/4 inch and is not effective on adults. There are other crop specific restrictions with these three so again, read the label before use. There are other insecticides out there like Baythroid XL, Karate Z, Mustang Max, Tombstone Helios, Grizzly some with different active ingredients that may or may not work as well as the ones I have mentioned so just be diligent, ask questions and check the product labels.

It is a good practice to rotate products each year and follow the Insect Resistance Management (IRM) practices. Remember try to avoid skin and eye contact and breathing vapors of any product but a little dab will likely not hurt you. On the other hand if you drench yourself with any insecticide it's not healthy! Let me know if you have any questions or need help with anything. Do your homework, follow safety protocols and be careful out there! You're the boss!!