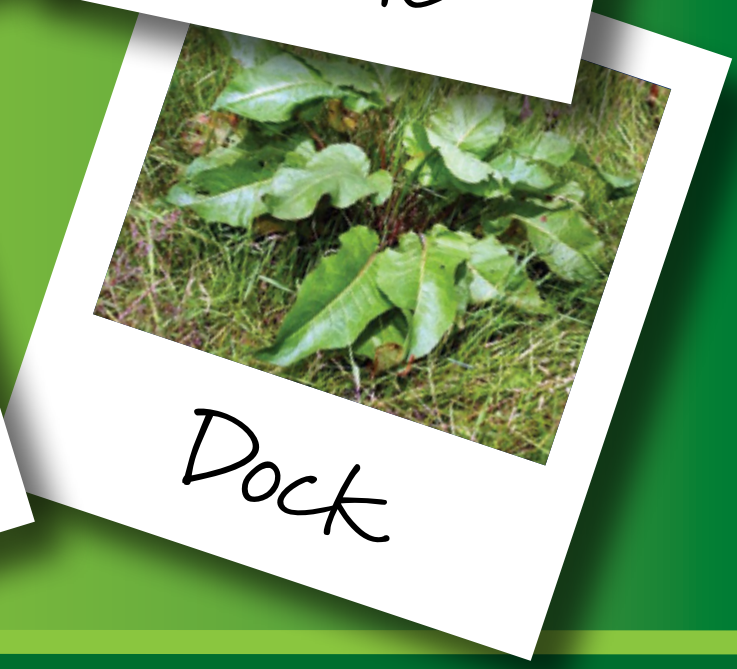

Herbicides for the control of Noxious Weeds

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FOREST SERVICE
An tSeirbhís Foraoisí

afbi AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

Well managed grassland is the cheapest source of food for cattle and sheep, and an important aspect of good management is the control of weeds in the grazing sward. Weeds are damaging to the sward because they occupy space within the sward and use soil nutrients that could be exploited by more productive grass species.

While it is recognised that weeds reduce grass yields, some weed species can have other detrimental effects - buttercup can taint milk as well as reducing overall milk yield. Other plants such as ragwort (also called ragweed or benweed) are toxic to cattle and, despite the widely held belief, sheep are just as susceptible to ragwort poisoning. The practice of allowing sheep access to ragwort-infested pasture to assist in clearing it of the weed is not recommended.

When weeds are permitted to grow unrestricted, they will spread to neighboring land. Ragwort and thistle seeds are easily spread as their seeds are readily carried by the wind.

It is important to remember that under The Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977, ragwort, creeping thistle, spear thistle, broad leafed docks, curled leafed docks and wild oats are classified as noxious weeds. DAERA has authority under the Order to insist that these weeds are destroyed under notice and failure to comply with such a requirement could result in prosecution.

The annual pulling or cutting of noxious weeds can have a long-term benefit as they may limit seed production and dispersal. Herbicides are generally very effective as a long-term control measure and when used in co-ordination with other good sward management practices, should prevent weeds spreading to adjacent land. When herbicides are to be used, equipment such as weed wipers and spot treatments may limit the amount of chemical required.

Care should be taken when preparing, filling, and applying herbicides to ensure none enter any drains or waterways as grassland herbicides are the most commonly detected pesticides in local drinking water catchments, MCPA being of particular concern. When spraying observe buffer zones and, where possible, use low drift nozzles. Also, when spraying is finished, ensure that sprayers are cleaned and stored under cover to prevent rain washing any contamination from the sprayer into drains.

A Water Catchment Partnership has been formed to highlight the issue of pesticides in local water catchments and is seeking to raise awareness of the issue with local users.

Important

Farmers who are in Agri-environmental schemes are restricted in what they may apply to the land. They should contact their Countryside Management Branch representative for advice.

These are a selection of the herbicides treatments currently available.

Some of these herbicides can be used alone or in combination with each other and some may not have approval for agricultural grassland but always follow instructions and conditions on the product label. Advise on products, timing of application and tank mixes should be available from a BASIS qualified advisor at the point of sale.

Docks

Herbicide:	**For general dock control** *(not clover safe)*	• fluroxypyr • clopyralid/triclopyr • aminopyralid/triclopyr • fluroxypyr/triclopyr • 2,4D/MCPA • 2,4D • clorpyralid/florasulam/ fluroxypyr • aminopyralid/fluroxypyr (amenity grassland only) • 2,4D/dicamba • prosulfocarb/dicamba
	For grass and clover *(clover may be inhibited by the treatment).*	• amidosulfuron • amidosulfuron/florpyrauxifen-benzyl

Timing:
Spray in late April or early May when the docks are actively growing with a large leaf area and before the plants have begun to flower and again in late August or early September. One application is usually not sufficient to control docks. Repeat sprays in the same or subsequent years will give much better control of this deep-rooted weed. Restrictions may apply to grazing or subsequent cropping - follow label instructions closely.

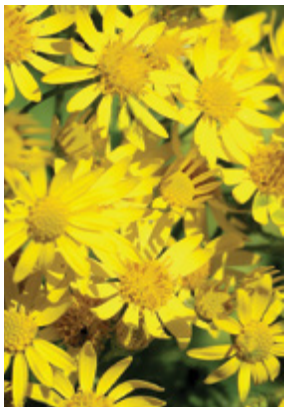
Creeping Thistle

Herbicide:	**For creeping thistle control** *(not clover safe)*	• 2,4-D • clopyralid • clopyralid/triclopyr • fluroxypyr/triclopyr • MCPA • 2,4D/MCPA • clorpyralid/florasulam/ fluroxypyr • 2,4D/dicamba • prosulfocarb/dicamba
	For creeping thistle control *(clover safe but clover may be inhibited)*	• MCPB (only approved for use on peas)

Timing:
Spray in May, June or July when the creeping thistles are actively growing with a large leaf area and before the plants have begun to shoot and flower.

Ragwort

Herbicide:	**For ragwort control** *(not clover safe)*	• MCPA • 2,4-D • aminopyralid/triclopyr • 2,4D/MCPA • 2,4D/dicamba • aminopyralid/fluroxypyr (amenity grassland only) prosulfocarb/dicamba
	For ragwort control *(clover safe, but clover may be inhibited)*	• MCPB



Timing:
These herbicides offer good control, but this needs to be a targeted program applied at the rosette stage in spring when the ragwort is actively growing, with a large leaf area and again before flowering in the second year. Dose rates must be carefully planned.

WARNING: Animals should be restricted from sprayed pasture in strict accordance with the instructions on the product label.

Wild Oats

Wild oats **(Avena fatua L.)** are a problem when infesting arable crops and can cause considerable yield reduction.

Herbicide:	**For limited wild oat control**	• **pinoxaden** (Not suitable for undersown crops. Should be used with recommended adjuvant). • **clodinafop-propargyl** is authorised for their control in the following crops: Grass Seed crops (off label), Spring Rye, Spring Triticale, Spring Wheat, Durum Wheat, winter rye, Winter Triticale, and Winter Wheat. There is some variation in approved use by product and label recommendations would need to be adhered to for the specific product used. It is not approved for use on Barley or Oats and some products exclude its use on undersown crops.

Timing:
Spray cereals in autumn, winter, or spring from the 2-leaf stage. Latest use before flag leaf extending stage. Use within a resistance management strategy.

Training and Certification

From ***26th November 2015*** all operators who apply professional pesticide products MUST be in possession of an accredited certificate of competence..

A range of companies provide this training across N. Ireland

From ***26th November 2016*** all professional pesticide application equipment (excluding handheld and knapsack) MUST have a certificate showing it has passed an independent inspection before it can be used. The Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) currently runs the National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS). To enquire about sprayer inspections, contact:

Web: www.nsts.org.uk/

Email: info@nsts.org.uk

Tel: 017 3320 7606

See also DAERA publication 'Pesticide Spraying Law Changes'

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