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## Avoiding chemical residues in grain

### Key points

- Read the label
- Observe the Withholding Period (WHP) for harvest
- Check with your agronomist and grain buyer if unsure.

Challenging seasonal conditions in many grain-producing regions mean we want to remind growers about the need for responsible chemical use, prior to harvest.

Upholding these standards helps Australia maintain access to important grain export markets while protecting our reputation as a source of high-quality, food-safe grain products.

Ensuring the correct application of agricultural chemicals helps deliver these shared outcomes for grain producers, exporters and the broader grains industry, by maintaining the environmental and public safety standards provided through maximum residue limits (MRL).

### What to do

#### *Read the label*

Growers are required to follow the label directions provided for registered chemical products, as approved by the [Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority \(APVMA\)](#).

Care should be taken to observe the specific label directions for each product. Labels can also vary for different states and regions and it's therefore important that the specific directions and advice is followed. In particular, many pulse crops are exported for human consumption without further processing, so market access is dependent on meeting acceptable MRLs for each market.

#### *Observe Withholding Periods (WHP) for harvest*

The registered use pattern as listed on the chemical label is often quite specific about rates, timing and the number of applications permitted per crop. The label will also include a withholding period, i.e. the time that must elapse between when the product is applied and when the crop is harvested, cut for hay or grazed. All the specific instructions must be followed carefully.



The withholding period is based on scientific studies that have determined how long it takes for the crop plant to metabolise or breakdown the applied chemical to below the product's MRL.

If there's any doubt, growers should consult their local agronomist or advisor about the correct use pattern for the chemical being used. It's advisable to consult your marketer to determine if the intended buyer has an MRL lower than that of Australia, or if that market does not permit that chemical to be used at all on that crop.

### ***Minor Use and Emergency Use Permits***

Where a product is not registered for use in pulses or oilseeds, it must not be applied, unless a minor use or emergency use permit is in place. Australia is in an enviable position with our permit system, something that is not found in many other countries. Minor Use Permits (MUP) are only available for minor crops (such as pulses and oilseeds). They are issued in response to an ongoing agronomic problem where full registration is not in place.

Industry bodies, such as Pulse Australia, usually apply for the MUP on behalf of growers. Substantial data from around the world is assessed to determine if the proposed use pattern is effective and will not pose a health risk to consumers (similar to the process for full registration). All permits have label recommendations for use, including rate and withholding periods (WHP) that must be observed so grain will comply with MRLs allowable for international market access.

### ***Vendor Declarations***

At the end of the season, growers are urged to complete a Vendor Declaration for grain harvested from each of their paddocks. This declaration shows what chemicals have been used on the crop and provides the information that marketers need when selling grain into overseas markets.

These declarations must be filled out accurately and honestly, even if an error in chemical use has been made. Alerting your marketer to any potential risk allows them to have the grain tested for residues and to find a market that is able to accept that product.

A chemical product may be properly and legally applied to a crop in Australia, but if an importing country has a different (lower) MRL to the Australian MRL, the grain cannot be sold into that particular overseas market.

It is much better to find out about a problem before the grain leaves Australian ports as it is costly to the marketer and the grower if grain shipments have to be re-routed. If grain fails an MRL test in an overseas port, this damages Australia's reputation as a supplier of clean grain and may have wide-ranging impacts on all Australian food exports.

Observe all withholding periods and record all product use on the [GTA Grain Commodity Vendor Declaration](#), where applicable.