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Will pesticides harm horses' tummies?

Our company maintains a 60-acre equestrian complex. The manager of the complex insists that all landscape chemicals are harmful to a horse's digestive system, and therefore none can be used. We have to trim miles of fence mechanically. Gravel drives are ill-defined due to weed and grass encroachment. Can you suggest any "horse safe" herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers?

–SOUTH CAROLINA

To manage the weeds, consider the following options. Based on the reports and literature in the scientific community, I disagree with your complex manager's statement that "all landscape chemicals are harmful to a horse's digestive system."

There are a number of products that can be used in pasture areas. The following information is my opinion. Please refer to the specific product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets before using.

One herbicide you may want to use is Scythe. This can be used around fence rows or gravel drives. Scythe is a fatty acid chemistry herbicide. It is a soap-based, non-selective herbicide. Scythe is quick acting, and the treated vegetation will discolor within a couple of hours. Do not walk on treated areas. If Scythe gets on your shoes, it will affect the areas in which you walk. Make sure to provide good coverage of the target vegetation to be managed. The
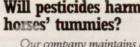
drawback with this product is that it will manage only those plants or plant parts it comes in contact with. Also, some weeds may resprout after a few days. Repeat applications may be needed.

For a traditional herbicide program, consider using non-selective herbicide products such as Roundup or Finale. These postemergent herbicides an help manage whatever weeds are present at the time of treatment. Repeat applications may be needed to help manage some of the weeds. After treatments are made, be careful not to track the product to other areas.

For selective management of broadleaf weeds in pasture areas, your best option is to use a postemergent herbicide called Remedy. DowElanco representatives indicated that this product is registered in South Carolina for treating weeds in pasture areas. Its active ingredient is Trichlopyr. The same active ingredient is in other herbicides, such as Garlon and Confront, which you may be familiar with.

Regarding your "horse safe" products, know this: most pesticides are put through more than 100 tests to determine possible risks to plants and animals. These products must also be evaluated further by university scientists and other private practitioners. Generally, it may take seven to more than 10 years to register and approve use of a pesticide. For further details, contact the manufacturing companies.

Okay to inject different product three years later?

We injected some elm trees with Arbotect three years ago. Can we now inject with Alamo for Dutch elm disease management? If we find the sites of original injections, can we inject now at the same locations?

–MINNESOTA

I do not anticipate you will have any problem in switching the treatment products. After three years, the presence of Arbotect would be insignificant.

Arbotect fungicide has been the standard treatment for Dutch elm disease by many arborists in the past. In recent years, Alamo is being used for Dutch elm disease management.

If you are not familiar with the Arbotect or Alamo fungicide products and their injection practices, consult your Novartis Company representatives to obtain additional information. Review the product labels, Material Safety Data Sheets and, particularly, the injection methodology to obtain good results.

It is a good idea to inject the Alamo into a new spot on the tree. Make sure injections were made on the rootflare. Where possible, avoid injecting in the valley ore recessed areas of the rootflare. **LM**