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CLINCHER, RICESTAR SHARE SIMILARITIES

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We still don't know if Dow will get a registration for Clincher for the 2002 growing season. Like Ricestar, Clincher is a postemergence, grass-only herbicide. The grass activity is very much like that from Ricestar- you need to strictly follow the old "Stam" rules and target small, actively growing grass. Grass that gets any size to it tends to escape Stam, Ricestar and Clincher.

Clincher is very safe to rice. Unlike Ricestar, there is no safener added to the active ingredient in Clincher. We've seen no crop response, even from double rates of Clincher. Ricestar also has good crop safety; however, with double rates, we have observed slight crop response in the form of stunting. Both herbicides are safer than Whip on smaller rice.

Both herbicides control barnyardgrass and sprangletop. Clincher is also a good fall panicum herbicide, but again, things need to be small and actively growing. One weakness with Clincher and Ricestar (and Command and Prowl for that matter) is that these herbicides do not control broadleaf weeds. With Clincher and Ricestar, it is tempting to tank mix a broadleaf herbicide. However, mixing grass and broadleaf herbicides often antagonizes grass control and makes it inadequate. Unfortunately, the antagonism is inconsistent. Every year a different herbicide causes the worst antagonism and different herbicides cause no antagonism. Because of the uncertainty, Dow is recommending against broadleaf tank mixtures.

A notable exception to tank mixtures are that both companies are planning to promote a Facet tank mix. Facet can be slightly weak as a postemergence herbicide and provides poor sprangletop control. In a tank mix Clincher and Ricestar would cover the weakness in sprangletop and give the Facet a postemergence kick on the other grasses. We have limited experience with these tank mixtures as most of our work focused on Clincher and Ricestar being used around broadleaf crops in drift-prone areas.

One other difference between Clincher and Ricestar is that Dow will be offering a postflood clean up option for larger, escaped barnyardgrass. It is essential that this application be made postflood. Preflood activity on anything but small grass has been poor. After flooding, weedy grasses are growing very fast and are more susceptible to the herbicide. Salvage applications on large grass can fail, like the other Salvage options, we have had some failures with Clincher.

It is exciting that rice producers can now choose from several weed control programs. Clincher is another useful tool. But be sure to target smaller grass and avoid broadleaf tank mixtures. Broadleaf weeds can be controlled later with a number of inexpensive treatments.