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PROPANIL USE DOWN, IMPORTANCE UNCHANGED

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An EPA representative called last summer to learn about propanil (Stam) for the sake of reregistration. One question they asked was if propanil was still needed given that we have new chemistry like Command, Ricestar, Regiment, Clincher and Newpath. Things have definitely changed, but propanil is just as important as ever. In the olden days, we'd spray Stam twice and might use upwards of 8 quarts when everything was said and done. Now, some growers get by with Command and broadleaf herbicides, and no propanil.

While Command has displaced a lot of propanil, the most popular follow up is propanil plus Londax or Permit (including the Duet- propanil + Londax product). In the Clearfield/Newpath system, legume weeds (coffeebean and Indigo) escape. There are many choices for those weeds, but one of the better choices is propanil tank mixed with the postemergence Newpath application. Dow sells Clincher and Grandstand (and Stam). Clincher is a grass only compound, but guess what- Stam followed by Clincher (or Clincher followed by Stam) have been a good overall programs. Propanil could work exactly the same with Ricestar. Even though Grandstand is a good broadleaf herbicide, it's activity is enhanced by adding a quart of propanil.

Valent's Regiment does some neat things like controlling large barnyardgrass and broadleaf weeds. But without any help, sprangletop, broadleaf signalgrass and fall panicum will escape. When a properly-timed propanil application takes them out, Regiment programs work well. Finally, don't forget how much the "older chemistry" of Facet, Prowl and Bolero benefitted from propanil.

Propanil resistant barnyardgrass has reduced propanil use some in Missouri (and a lot in Arkansas). With the new chemistry, propanil may now be more of a broadleaf herbicide than a grass herbicide. But regardless of what we "think" there is no harm in our "broadleaf" herbicide killing some grass.

At the Rice Industry Outlook conference, I was reminded of the tremendous number herbicide resistance problems that plague California rice growers. The most likely culprit is that they stopped using Stam in the late 1960's, and switched almost exclusively to Ordram + Londax. Whatever the weed and whatever the program, overuse can lead to resistance and that's what they got. We did the same thing here with propanil, but were fortunate to have Prowl, Bolero, and Facet to mix things up.

Now, more than ever, we need to mix up our weed control programs, and Rice has finally gained enough herbicides that we can do exactly that. If you were teaching a weed science course and asked the class to name a herbicide that controlled almost all weeds without harming rice, there is only one answer- propanil. While we finally have several choices and use many fewer quarts of propanil, it's importance is as high as ever.