Grassland Sprays

Minute amounts of weedkillers and pesticides can be detected in water and the tiniest of splashes which occur when filling the sprayer can have a big impact. Just one foil seal contains enough pesticide to breach the water quality standards in a 30km stream. Some of the sprays used on grassland are found in water, including compounds such as 2,4-D, 2,4-DB, meprop-p, MCPA, MCPB and clopyralid. When these are used correctly, and care is paid to filling and disposal practices, the risks to water will be greatly reduced. Think where you fill and wash the sprayer and make sure there is no chance of any spills, spray or washings reaching water.

1. Get advice from a BASIS-registered adviser on when and how to use the right product.
2. Only use approved pesticides and keep them in a clearly marked lockable store.
3. Anyone using pesticides must be trained, competent and where necessary qualified to do the job. Or use a contractor*.
4. Check sprayer for drips and leaks. Use the jug test to check nozzle flow rates.
5. When filling take great care. Use a drip tray or portable bund when filling on grass, concrete or hardcore. Alternatively fill in a bunded concrete area where drainage is actively managed to stop pesticides reaching water.
6. Triple rinse and drain pesticide containers before storing them under cover to await disposal by a waste disposal contractor.
7. Ensure there is no risk of drift or overspray reaching water. Leave a 5m unsprayed strip next to ditches and water courses and consider using drift reducing nozzles.
8. Wash sprayer in the field and park under cover.

‘Pesticide’ is a very broad definition within the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 which includes herbicides, insecticides, growth regulators, soil sterilants, rodenticides and wood preservatives amongst others.

Contractors*

Using a contractor can take a lot of the hassle out of spraying BUT Ensure the following first:

- Operators are qualified and members of NRoSO
- The sprayer has a current NSTS certificate
- Any filling point used poses no risks to water
- Containers are cleaned and drained ready for disposal
- Agree who is responsible for disposal
- Accurate spray records are promptly supplied

Remember it is still your responsibility to ensure that all regulations are met

Clear up all spills, no matter how small, immediately.

Never wash any spray or spills into farm drains or watercourses.

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