

Keep it Clean!



Canadian agriculture is very dependent on international markets. Somewhere between 80 and 90% of our canola, cereals, and pulse crops end up being consumed in other countries. And each of those countries have their own rules and regulations on what products can be used on the crops we sell them, as well as the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) that is allowable for the products that they do approve. So as a major exporter of agricultural commodities, we need to pay attention to the needs of those importing our grains, oilseeds, and pulses as well as to the labels approved by Agriculture Canada. A product registered in Canada, but not accepted by the end user or an accepted product exceeding the MRL can result in a shipment being rejected. This is not only an expensive mistake that carries the possibility of liability coming back to the individual grower; it also damages Canada's reputation as a reliable agricultural supplier.

As a producer, keeping track of all this seems like a daunting task. MRLs are always changing as new research changes our views of what is or isn't safe. Also in some jurisdictions (most notably the European Union), the process has become highly politicized, making their rules inconsistent and highly unpredictable. Fortunately, we don't have to keep track of all of this. We have an advisory council called "Keep it Clean" that does the heavy lifting for us. Who is Keep it Clean? According to their website, they are "a joint initiative of the Canola Council of Canada, Cereals Canada, Pulse Canada and the Prairie Oat Growers Association, providing growers and crop advisers with resources for growing market-ready crops. "Every year, they review what is happening in the countries we export to and publish an advisory on what crop protection products should be avoided. You can find the list by following this link ([Product Advisory - Keep it Clean](#)). I would suggest bookmarking this website as the list is updated every year prior to the growing season.

Every farmer has a role to play in protecting Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier of high quality, safe food. You can do your part by only using approved products at the proper time, paying special attention to pre-harvest intervals recommended by the manufacturer (ignoring pre harvest intervals is the most common cause of exceeding MRLs). Ensure you store your grain safely (no treated seed mixed in and no seed from bins treated with unapproved insecticides). **And most importantly, deliver what you declare.** As the Keep it Clean website says; *"The Declaration of Eligibility affidavit is a legally binding document and any incorrect information, intentional or unintentional, can be traced back to the farm and individuals can be held liable for the costs associated with contamination of a bin or shipment."* With that kind of liability, trying to sneak a mistake past the grain buyer is just not worth the risk. So before you finalize your crop protection plan this year, make sure you take the time to look at the Product Advisory – it may be the best 15 minutes investment of time you make this spring.



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