

# Fertilizer/Herbicide Combination Products

## FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

As of January 1, 2010 products containing a combination of fertilizer and herbicide (often known as weed and feed) will no longer be sold or used in Alberta.

Weed and feed is applied to an entire lawn, regardless of the area of weed infestation. This results in an over-application of the herbicide 2,4-D. Herbicide-only products will still be available for spot application. Localized application methods result in less surplus chemical draining from the lawn, running into storm sewers and entering waterways.

A weed and feed ban:

- Restricts the use of products that contribute to water pollution, but allows homeowners to better target weeds with herbicide-only products;
- Does not affect the agriculture sector or professional turf managers – they use different products; and
- Complements actions under Alberta's *Water for Life* strategy.

2,4-D has been detected in over 90 per cent of surface water samples downstream of urban areas. Concentrations of 2,4-D detected near urban areas are up to 10 times higher than those in rural sampling locations.

The application of 2,4-D to an entire lawn does not prevent weed growth – it only works when weeds are actively growing and is most effective when applied to leaves.

Currently, the average amount of 2,4-D in Alberta's rivers and lakes is less than federal guideline thresholds. By taking action now, Alberta is making a proactive effort to eliminate unwanted substances from our waterways. Fertilizer/herbicide combination products represent about 50 per cent of urban lawn herbicide use.

### Why is the Government of Alberta not banning all herbicides, as has been done by some eastern Canadian provinces?

- Cosmetic pesticide bans in Quebec and Ontario were in response to widespread municipal bylaws.
- The Government of Alberta supports using pesticides only when necessary. By instituting a province-wide ban on a product that does not support targeted weed control, Alberta Environment can eliminate unnecessary and unwanted chemicals from our rivers and lakes.

### If Health Canada says it is safe to use 2,4-D, why is it prohibited in Alberta?

- The policy is banning 2,4-D for sale or use in fertilizer/herbicide combination products. It is still available for use as a spot-targeted herbicide.
- Alberta is taking action to prevent the unnecessary build-up of this unwanted chemical from our waterways.

### What should homeowners do to control weeds on lawns and turf once the ban is in effect?

- Homeowners should consider using products that can be applied directly to weeds. They will use a significantly smaller amount of product and will be better able to target problem areas.
- Herbicide-only products (including those containing 2,4-D) will still be available to homeowners. These products use less herbicide to target weeds and do not have to be spread over an entire lawn.
- Homeowners who do not want to use any chemicals on their lawns can ask their lawn care product retailer about environmentally friendly weed control options, including a variety of manual weed removal devices.

For more information about the restriction of fertilizer/herbicide combination products call 780-427-2700 toll free by first dialing 310-0000.