

MSMA Update for Turfgrass Applications: Still Available

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October 1, 2012, the Organic Arsenical Products Task Force (OAPTF) announced the use of MSMA for weed management on golf courses, sod farms, and highway rights-of-way **will continue** beyond the original phase-out date of December 31, 2013. The OAPTF anticipates labeled turfgrass “applications will be extended for at least three years, and likely longer.”

In a memorandum from the OAPTF and supporting letter from the U.S. EPA, a peer review of scientific data by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) specific to the risk assessment of inorganic arsenic will be conducted. MSMA is an organic arsenical postemergence herbicide and has less risk than inorganic arsenic. The review is expected to take 41 months. The OAPTF anticipates the NAS review to find a “less stringent risk” for human exposure to inorganic arsenic. Upon the conclusion of the review the OAPTF believes the data will support unconditional re-registration of MSMA for current sites and ability to restore previously lost sites (e.g. sports fields).

However, until the review is complete and re-registration is obtained, the use of MSMA for turfgrass sites is confined to golf courses, sod farms, and highway rights-of-way and subject to the 2009 use restrictions. Golf course use is limited to spot treatments not to exceed 100 square feet per spot, or 25% of total golf course acreage per year. One broadcast application is allowed for newly constructed golf courses and sod farm use is limited to no more than two broadcast applications per season. A 25-foot buffer zone must be maintained around permanent water bodies. Two broadcast applications per year

are allowed for use on highway rights-of-way only while a 100-foot buffer zone must be maintained around permanent water bodies.

This extension of MSMA use does not alter the previous decision for turfgrass professionals managing residential and commercial lawns or athletic fields. These site uses remain off-label and are not permissible on MSMA sold after December 31, 2010. However, MSMA with an “old” label for these sites can still be used until it is depleted.

The use of MSMA in turf continues to be a fluid situation as further clarification and understanding is determined. When additional information becomes available, it will be provided and posted on www.GeorgiaTurf.com and the OAPTF website www.oaptf.com. To see the current EPA’s amendment to organic arsenical herbicides, please visit www.GeorgiaTurf.com.