NEBRASKA
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DICAMBA **BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES 2026**

BACKGROUND

On February 6, 2026, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reregistered three dicamba herbicide products for use on dicamba tolerant soybeans as Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP), Engenia®, Stryax® and Tavium®. EPA has classified the three product registrations as RUPs to provide additional safeguards for how the products are applied and what pre- and post-application activities are required of applicators. The reregistration is effective for the 2026 and 2027 application seasons. Changes were made to the labels specific to record-keeping requirements and application standards compared to previous registrations of the products. While most of the new label language is logical and understandable, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) believes it is helpful to provide additional guidance to applicators on some terms found in the three labels. It should be noted that the information listed below applies to any labeled use of the RUP dicamba products, not just for dicamba tolerant soybeans, and could also apply to any other dicamba herbicide labels that EPA might register in the future for use on dicamba tolerant crops.

LABEL CHANGES

Total Annual Rate: The annual rate for all dicamba products applied to a field during a growing season was reduced from 4 applications and 2.0lbs/acre to 2 applications and 1.0lbs/acre for all dicamba products.

Application Restrictions: These are based off temperature versus date on the calendar but are still limited to R1 growth stage and prior. Temperature restrictions are as follows.

- Under 85˚F: 0.5 lbs. dicamba/acre + 40 fl. oz VRA
- Between 85˚F and 95˚F: 0.5 lbs. dicamba/acre + 40 fl. oz VRA and must restrict applications to 50% of the total acres of DT Soybeans managed by the grower within the county within the day.
- 95˚F and above: No applications can be made, and applications must be suspended if temperature rises past forecasted high for the day.

Runoff Mitigations: 3-6 points required if application site is within 1,000 feet up gradient from unmanaged areas

Downwind Buffer: 240 feet with available buffer reduction mitigations.

Required DRAs and VRAs

Additional recordkeeping requirements: Runoff/Erosion Mitigation if applicable, air temperature forecasts

LABEL TERMS

Boom Height: All RUP dicamba labels require maximum boom heights of "24 inches above target pest or crop canopy". NDA recognizes most spray boom systems vary in height when fully extended due to equipment design and advises applicators to make sure all sections of the spray boom are capable of being lowered to this distance above the crop canopy. NDA advises applicators to consider applying hilly or terraced fields in a manner that reduces or avoids the ends of spray booms bouncing up as the terrain changes, and that having tall weeds does not mean an applicator can raise the boom higher than 24 inches above the crop canopy.

Equipment Rinse Water Management: All pesticide labels provide specific language or guidance on how to properly manage equipment rinsates. Many labels direct the user to dispose of equipment rinse water "on-site", or to dispose of chemical waste "in compliance with local, state or federal guidelines". NDA advises applicators that disposal of remaining pesticide tank material "on-site" means sprayed in the field to which the application was made, not dumped at the field edge or released on a parking area at the mixing and loading area back home. NDA reminds applicators that any unapplied material returned to the mix/load site, or equipment wash/rinse water generated over a loadout pad is considered waste pesticide. Collection of this waste should be used at a future time as makeup water on the same crop or site of application allowed by the label. Applicators should note that Title 128, Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations, are the state regulations covering the proper disposal of pesticide waste that cannot be applied according to label directions.

Equipment Cleanout Procedure: RUP dicamba labels require applicators to ensure that spray equipment is clean before using the product and after the product is applied. Cleaning equipment prior to loading with dicamba assures that the materials in previous loads do not negatively impact the performance of the dicamba or the crop being treated. The intent of the labels registered by EPA and NDA for 2026-2027 require spray systems to be cleaned following the procedures found on the RUP dicamba labels before using the herbicide the first time, as well as after the application. NDA advises applicators that all mixing, loading and transportation equipment used for dicamba applications are also potential sources of contamination and should be treated the same as spray equipment when it comes to cleanout before changing product mixes.

Forecasted Temperatures: Maximum temperatures must be forecast from NOAA/National Weather Service and hold within the same temperature range for the day of and day after application.

Grower: the individual or business entity managing the crop on the land on which the product is being applied. If the grower is not the applicator, it is the responsibility of the applicator to ensure that they have communicated with the grower to obtain information on the number of DT crop acres when planning applications in the 85˚F and 95˚F temperature range.

Managed Areas: The label supersedes EPA's mitigation menu. Therefore, agricultural fields, regardless of dicamba tolerance, are no longer listed as a managed area when calculating drift buffer reductions for these products.

Sensitive Areas, Sensitive Plants and Residential Awareness: Sensitive areas are defined as bodies of water and non-residential, uncultivated areas that may harbor sensitive plant species (other than crops). The RUP dicamba labels list a number of broadleaf plants that are sensitive to dicamba; however, not all sensitive crops are listed. NDA advises applicators that any dicamba-sensitive plant grown as a crop is considered a sensitive plant including organic crops that are transitioning to certification and fully certified organic. Applicators are encouraged to consult the DriftWatch website for a listing of enrolled sensitive crops in their area. The website address is https://ne.driftwatch.org/map.

Neighboring or Adjacent: The RUP dicamba labels for 2026-2027 use the terms "neighboring sensitive plants and residential areas" or "adjacent fields" for those areas requiring protection from spray drift. However, the labels do not define a specific distance; instead, they defer the decision to the applicator. Since the RUP dicamba labels require applicators to maintain a 240 ft buffer from downwind sensitive crops, sensitive sites or residential areas, NDA believes the terms "neighboring" or "adjacent" should use the same distances, as a minimum, for purposes of scouting and documenting all nearby sensitive areas. Therefore, if using these products, applicators are required to scout and document all nearby sensitive crops and residential areas at least 240 feet for applications of RUP dicamba products. These are minimum distances, and applicators should document other nearby sensitive crops or residential areas that are further if conditions warrant.

Daytime Application Hours: The 2026-2027 labels continue to restrict applications such that applications may not be initiated earlier than one hour after sunrise and must terminate no later than two hours before sunset. Since visible sunrise and sunset can be obscured by clouds, trees or terrain, NDA advises applicators to consult with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Solar Calculator found at https://gml.noaa.gov/grad/solcalc/ to determine a precise and official source in determining local sunrise/sunset for purposes of label compliance. The intent of restricting spray applications during daylight hours is to avoid spraying during a possible air temperature inversion event.

Measuring Wind Speed, Wind Direction and Temperature: The RUP dicamba labels require wind speed, wind direction and air temperature must be measured at the start and finish of any application at boom height. NDA recognizes that many applicators use technology that accesses nearby or regional weather stations for this purpose; however, the RUP dicamba labels require these readings to be made at boom height, which means an off-site weather station reading does not comply with this label provision. NDA advises that wind direction should be recorded as the direction from which the wind is coming, not the direction it is going. Most hand-held weather instruments record wind direction as a compass heading or as abbreviations such as SW or NE. NDA advises applicators to record the compass direction as the equipment shows it and avoid trying to interpret a compass reading into a direction abbreviation. NDA advises applicators to document the device used and if practical, take a photograph of the reading at the start and finish times of the application as proof positive what the real-time weather was doing before and after the application.

RUNOFF/EROSION MITIGATION POINTS

EPA has adopted a mitigation point system to convey the level of runoff/erosion mitigation required for a pesticide to address identified ecological risks for all nontarget species, including threatened and endangered species. Users can achieve points based on the number and type of runoff/erosion mitigation measures that are adopted for a given treated field. Users also achieve points based on the presence of certain field characteristics/application parameters (e.g., located in low runoff vulnerability county, flat field-slope, use of micro-sprinklers, treating only a small portion of the field). EPA determines the number of points required for a pesticide through its risk assessment process on a use site/crop basis. Check the pesticide label for the number of points you need to achieve, if mentioned, then work through the steps at the Mitigation Menu. There are tools that can help, including a printed worksheet, the Mitigation Calculator spreadsheet file, and the PALM web app (Pesticide App for Label Mitigation). Each of these are linked on the Mitigation Menu page – choose the one that works best for you. Please contact NDA at 402.471.2351 if there are questions on these tools.

ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION

All RUP dicamba labels have sections that direct the applicator to take steps, when necessary, to protect endangered species or their habitat. The areas for RUP dicamba on the Bulletins Live Two map have changed, as well as the restrictions for those areas. The following are important parts of what this means to pesticide applicators in certain areas of the state.

- Any application of RUP dicamba in an area listed on Bulletins Live Two (BLT) must comply with additional restrictions listed on the bulletin.
- Bulletins can be accessed on EPA's website (https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/bulletins). The contact information on the label is for technical assistance only. If you are unable to access and save a bulletin, contact NDA at 402.471.2351.
- Applicators will need to know the specific location for the field(s) they intend to spray with dicamba. The EPA website allows applicators to use multiple ways to search for fields, so applicators need to be prepared with field locations or addresses when using the search function. Applicators will also need that information if calling NDA or other partners for assistance.
- If an applicator finds their target site field lies within a shaded PULA (pesticide use limitation area), they will need to follow the restriction directions found on the bulletin. This requires an additional 3 mitigation points for runoff/erosion, so applicators will need to determine if they comply by going to the Mitigation Menu (described above)
- NDA recommends that the Bulletin be printed or saved, regardless of whether the application is made in or outside of a PULA.

An example of a pesticide use limitation area is shown below. The shaded area is the PULA, and any field located inside of that zone must follow the Mitigation Menu to determine if additional runoff/erosion mitigations are needed to comply.

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