

Opposition to EPA re-approval of Bayer, BASF dicamba herbicides mounts as widespread crop damage continues

Decisions made in the next year will be critical for the future use of the herbicide dicamba, a weed killer that has skyrocketed in use in recent years but has been blamed for extensive crop damage The herbicide is registered through Dec. 20, 2020.

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In 2019, Illinois, the nation's largest soybean producing state, received 724 complaints about dicamba, up from 330 in 2018 and 246 in 2017, according to state documents. Illinois had fewer than 100 pesticide complaints for 30 years

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Bayer has said that the majority of the complaints are due to off-label spraying and that dicamba has been blamed for damage caused by other pesticides and disease.

Aaron Hager, a weed science professor at the University of Illinois, said that volatility of dicamba, not the other factors, is absolutely to blame. Ford Baldwin, a professor emeritus of weed science at the University of Arkansas, said that the academic community has "moved on" from debating with Bayer over the issue

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On April 21, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments in a lawsuit alleging the EPA violated the law in re-approving dicamba in 2018. That lawsuit seeks to throw out the EPA's October 2018 decision to re-approve the registration for dicamba.

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