

Australia's grains and grapes growers unite for best practice herbicide use

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Australian grain growers are being urged to exercise extra caution this spring, as warmer conditions result in broad leaf weed control programs coinciding with early budburst in vineyards across many parts of the country.

The situation has grape growers on high alert, prompting Wine Australia and the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) to join forces to discuss how to support growers in minimising spray drift risks across regions where vineyards neighbour or are in the same region as grain growing operations.

Ken Young, GRDC Senior Manager Biosecurity and Regulation said GRDC had information and resources to guide and support growers' decision-making when it came to weather and environmental conditions, herbicide mixes and machinery or equipment set-up.

"Early spring is critical times for both industries, so we need grain growers to be talking with neighbouring grape growers and putting programs in place that ensure herbicides, such as 2,4-D are hitting their target," he said.

"Additionally, cereals are sensitive to 2,4-D once the plant changes into reproductive phase, from head initiation, booting and flowering and for many cereal crops this is occurring now."

Dr Young said spray droplet drift could happen where spraying occurs in unsuitable conditions such as windy conditions (directly affecting neighbouring crops) and during hazardous surface temperature inversion (droplets could stay suspended in the air and move kilometres away from the site of application).