

Ready On-Line Access to Chemical Labels for Agricultural Production

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Today it is easy to access chemical labels for insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, seed treatments, growth regulators, nematicides, etc. for chemicals that you use or are interested in for your farm, ranch, or clientele. Having all the labels in one place, like Chemical Data Management Systems' <http://www.cdms.net>, enables you to quickly sort through important considerations like rotation restrictions or see what crops a particular chemical is labeled for. CDMS's website is probably the most common website that I refer to in my work for producers—even though I am not a weed control or plant disease expert or an entomologist.

Also, a key function of CDMS' website is that I can “shop” for alternative chemicals with the same active ingredient. Perhaps I am looking for a less expensive alternative to a common brand name chemical from the original manufacturer. What might be available? This is one way to find out.

Function 1: Searching for a chemical product name that you know (most common)

- 1) Starting with <http://www.cdms.net>, at the top click ‘Services’ then ‘Labels/MSDS,’
- 2) Enter the desired product name in the search box to the upper right (keep the name simple, for example ‘Prowl’ rather than ‘Prowl H₂O’ to ensure you return all labels for Prowl products)
- 3) Choose the main label or any supplemental labels you might need. Sometimes you may find a label that is specific for a state (e.g., California) in addition to the main label. Also, occasionally there will be two labels, but you can usually tell by the title which one is more recent. Some colleagues have found occasionally that generic materials might be missing though on the other hand we may find needed labels here before the company websites have the information.

Once you are in the label, especially if it is quite long, you may find it helpful to search for a specific word in the label like ‘sunflower’ or ‘kochia’ or ‘rotation’ or ‘aerial’ or ‘jointing’. Though sometimes I don't get the computer to correctly find the words I know are in the label, you can try this by hitting ‘Control F’ then a search box will appear, so type in the word you want. If you type in ‘sunflower’ you might find both the commercial crop AND the control of sunflower as a weed (either volunteer or as a native weed) AND the rotation restriction back to sunflower planted after a specific herbicide.

Function 2: Searching by active ingredient

To search by active ingredient follow these steps:

- 1) Starting with <http://www.cdms.net>, at the top click 'Services' then 'Labels/MSDS'
- 2) On the left side of the screen click 'Other Search Options' You will be prompted to either register for a free UserName and Password, or if you have already done so enter your information. First-time registration might require up to 3 days for you to receive your ID. (Also, you will need to renew or re-register your password every six months, which may take a day or two after you submit your request).
- 3) CDMS then offers a robust label search application at no charge. This application enables you to search the CDMS label database by key criteria including crop/site (e.g., the type of target crop, which includes your choice of herbicide, insecticide, fungicide, etc.), pest(s), state, common name and more. The application returns a list of products that fit the criteria and links to the label.

Are there other sources of online chemical information?

Yes. The most common is www.greenbook.net, which has greatly improved its user interface though when I recently tested it for identifying labeled herbicides for some sample crops it returned many chemicals that are in fact not labeled. Greenbook may enable more easier searching by active ingredient in that you don't have to spell out complicated chemical names (a menu of the active ingredients is provided). In the past I found that some companies' products, including major manufacturers, were not always in the database. I don't know if this still might be the case.

Your chemical manufacture's website is also an online source of labels for the product you are using, but this of course would offer no opportunity to search for products by crop or active ingredient across the universe of agricultural chemicals among all manufacturers.

Smartphone access is not a substitute for being in possession of the label

These webpages are readable on smartphones, but do not consider the fact that you can access the label in this manner a replacement for actually being in possession of the label—which the law requires—when you are applying chemicals. You need the label with you at all times. (This may change in the future; contact Texas Department of Agriculture for further comment on this issue.)

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