

Proposed APVMA chemical reconsideration outcome for Diquat

- The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) released the proposed regulatory decision for the chemical reconsideration of diquat on the 30 July 2024.
- The proposed regulatory decision follows an APVMA review of diquat.
- The APVMA proposed decision will be released for public consultation for three months closing 29 October 2024.
- Diquat is a non-selective contact herbicide belonging to the bipyridinium class of compounds which also includes the herbicide paraquat. Diquat and paraquat have been registered for use in Australia since 1964.
- Diquat is an active constituent in 67 agricultural chemical products currently registered for use in Australia by the APVMA.
- There are 23 products containing diquat as the only active constituent with a concentration of 200 g/L diquat and 44 products combining with paraquat as a second active constituent at 115 g/L diquat.
- Diquat is used to control weeds before planting, before or just after crop emergence, and directed spray between the rows of established crops.
- Diquat and diquat/paraquat combination products are registered for the control of broadleaf weeds in seed beds before sowing, and pre-harvesting operations of several crops, as well as post-emergence inter-row weed control.
- Diquat is also used to facilitate harvesting operations desiccating weeds, accelerating the drying of crops and reducing the moisture content of seeds within a number of crops.
- Diquat is also registered for use in aquatic situations for control of various aquatic weeds, particularly invasive species.
- The fundamental issues identified in the proposed regulatory decision are that there are unacceptable environmental risks associated with the uses on the approved labels.
- The proposed decision recommends the deletion of label instructions (and where relevant registration of products) on diquat uses except those limited to general weed control in row crops, vegetables, market gardens, oilseeds and use limited to rates not exceeding 283 g diquat/ha.
- General weed control in wheat and oats will also be supported at rates up to 122 g diquat/ha and pasture and lucerne at rates up to 88 g diquat/ha.
- Combination products containing 115 g/L diquat and 135 g/L paraquat, as an aid to cultivation in fallow (full disturbance only) have been supported at rates up to 700 mL/ha.
- Uses in sugar cane, fruit orchards, vineyards, aquatic areas and as a pre-harvest crop desiccant will be removed.
- If the APVMA's final regulatory decision removes the above listed uses, as proposed, it may have an impact on many agricultural industries in Queensland, including sugar cane, horticulture and broad acre cropping. It is unsure at this stage what alternative

chemical products will be available that can replace diquat products in these situations.

- The APVMA's final regulatory decision may also impact biosecurity and the control of aquatic weeds, particularly invasive species by reducing the viable options currently available for control programs.