

April 30, 2020

Dear Pesticide Application Community,

Re: PPE shortages for pesticide applications due to Covid-19

Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development along with Manitoba Conservation and Climate, are writing to you today to advise that there may be disruptions in personal protective equipment (PPE) supply, regionally or nationally, this spring and summer. Many of you may not feel the effects of PPE shortages until later in the year while others may have already been impacted. The intent of this letter is to raise industry awareness of the issue.

Some herbicide, fungicide, and insecticide labels **require respirators** to prevent unacceptable levels of exposure. As you are likely already aware, there is a critical need for N95 respirators in the health care field due to Covid-19 and it is generally understood there are few, if any, “dust/mist” type respirators or particulate filters (N, P, or HE) currently available in the marketplace. Distributors may not be accepting new orders at this time, and back-orders have significantly delayed delivery-dates.

While the situation is not ideal, please be advised that:

- Pesticides may **not** be applied without the label-required PPE, application without label specified PPE is considered non-compliant.
- Home-made masks are **not** sufficient substitutes for label-required respirators/masks.
- **No** exemption or relaxation of the requirements has been made by Health Canada.
- Users may need to select alternative products or practices, if required PPE is **not** available. For example, re-usable chemical resistant gloves can be washed and re-used in the absence of disposable gloves.
- If users go without required PPE, it may not only present unacceptable risk to the applicator themselves, it may create an additional burden to the health care system.

We are asking you all to spread the word to the Manitoba pesticide application community including applicators, dealers, consultants, extension educators, and other interested parties on the matter. We advocate the following measures that can be taken to mitigate the impact, including:

- Reviewing product labels to identify key products that require respiratory protection.
- Evaluate existing inventory and/or availability of PPE.
- Seek alternative products or practices if PPE is not obtainable. There may be a very similar product available with different label requirements. Consult with your local supplier or check out the [Health Canada Pesticide Label Search](#) for alternatives.

Should you be aware of anything our respective Departments can do to help address these challenges in Manitoba please do not hesitate to contact us directly. For Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development please contact Colleen Flynn at (204) 750-0754, or Colleen.Flynn@gov.mb.ca, or for Manitoba Conservation and Climate contact Krystal Penner at (204) 945-7107 or via email krystal.penner@gov.mb.ca.

We truly are, all in this together.

Sincerely,



Colleen Flynn
Pesticide Minor Use and Regulatory Specialist
Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development



Krystal Penner
Pesticide and Agricultural Program Specialist
Manitoba Conservation and Climate

cc: Anastasia Kubinec/Miles Beaudin, Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development
Marnie Burr/Densie Ilchyna/Nasila Ali, Health Canada
Jason Flint, Pest Management Regulatory Agency
Jen Webb/Shannon Kohler/Cordella Friesen, Manitoba Conservation and Climate