



NOVEL BAREGROUND SOLUTION BEATS RESISTANT WEEDS TO **KEEP WATER FLOWING**

In many Western states, getting water from areas where it's naturally plentiful to areas it's not is critical to sustaining the needs of both agriculture, as well as homes and businesses. In Solano County, California, water distribution falls primarily to the Solano Irrigation District (SID), which has entitlements for 141,000 acre feet of agricultural and domestic water, and maintains a system of irrigation canals.

Nathan Hicks is lead pest control applicator with SID. It's up to him to keep the banks of those irrigation canals, and all other managed areas, free from all vegetation.

"We use bareground herbicide applications on our canals, on the roads, as well as at the tank farms we operate as treatment plants," Hicks says.

The reasons are apparent: vegetation prevents access to the canals and adjacent service roads, it can restrict water flow, it presents a fire hazard in certain areas and invasive weeds use the canals as a vehicle to spread seeds and infest new areas.

Unfortunately for Hicks, the means to achieving the desired end results is sometimes anything but apparent, thanks in large part to resistant weeds.

STAYING VIGILANT AND INNOVATIVE TO COMBAT RESISTANCE

When making bareground applications for SID, Hicks stays vigilant when it comes to recognizing and then managing

weed-resistance issues. It's all too common in Solano County, where numerous invasive species have developed resistance to many herbicide treatments.

"Resistance is a terrible issue, especially here in Northern California, where we've got a lot of pressure from resistant species like marestail and shortpod mustard," Hicks says.

To counteract this, he began incorporating a new dual-mode herbicide, Cleantraxx® herbicide, into his bareground program, on the advice from his longtime Dow AgroSciences territory manager, Beau Miller.

"We've learned in the past that when we would stick to using just a couple different kinds of chemistries, we'd get huge monocultures of weeds that just weren't affected by treatments," Hicks says. "We see a lot of value in adding different modes of action to our bareground herbicide program, as that's the only way to really handle the problem and why we're gearing more toward Cleantraxx."

While situations vary, bareground treatments with Cleantraxx are recommended at a minimum of 32 ounces per acre, and when paired with Milestone® specialty herbicide at 7 ounces per acre, or Opensight® specialty herbicide at 3.3 ounces per acre, it forms an especially potent mix for residual control of broadleaf weeds and annual grasses.

While Hicks is quick to say there is no "silver bullet" when it comes to weed control, he's seeing great results in sites where Cleantraxx has gone out.

"It has a really broad spectrum, so I've had a lot of success with Cleantraxx on several species like marehail and tumbleweed, and we're starting to test it on stinkwort, as that's another emerging species," Hicks says. "It's really held especially well on Russian thistle (tumbleweed) when we mix it with Milestone. I've had areas with terrible tumbleweed problems, and it looks like there's none coming through at all."

Mixing Cleantraxx® herbicide with Milestone has also proved effective on perhaps the most challenging species that Hicks encounters.

"We have a serious problem with a resistant hybridized Italian ryegrass," Hicks says. "But we've found that Cleantraxx works really well in combination with Milestone as a postemergence burndown on the ryegrass, especially at our tank farms."

TANK MIX PROVIDES VALUABLE CONTROL IN SENSITIVE AREAS

Besides SID tank farms, this resistant ryegrass frequently invades some of the more sensitive sites Hicks manages. He says the tank mix of Cleantraxx and Milestone has proved especially valuable in enabling him to effectively treat these areas.

"We've been using Cleantraxx a lot in the rights-of-way that go through cities where we have many different kinds of sensitive ornamental species growing along fence lines," Hicks says. "It's allowed us to be able to treat to bareground in these sensitive areas, and we combine it with Milestone in a lot of cases here as well."

The aforementioned quick burndown also is appreciated by local authorities.

"As we started using a lot more Cleantraxx, I noticed the fast burndown, which is an added benefit when we're working through

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View our new video on solutions for total vegetation control, featuring Solano Irrigation District, at BetterBareground.com.

urban areas," Hicks says. "Local fire departments don't want to see anything growing where it shouldn't be because it presents a fire danger."

MANUFACTURER SUPPORT THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In striving for total vegetation control, Hicks points to a trusted partner he's come to count on.

"For me, a key reason to picking a herbicide is the manufacturer support," Hicks says. "I've worked with my Dow rep Beau for almost 13 years, and he's always been there when we've had issues or questions about mixing different herbicides."

That support extends beyond just product recommendations. Hicks also appreciates Miller's willingness to help with things like continuing education for applicators and guidance on equipment, as well as sharing success stories from similar operations where he sees parallels.

"He doesn't just tell me about application methods that he's tried; he tells me about other districts and what they are finding success with," Hicks says. "From rates to timing to different tank-mix options, it's been real helpful. And you don't get that with a lot of companies."

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When treating areas in and around roadside or utility rights-of-way that are or will be grazed, hayed or planted to forage, important label precautions apply regarding harvesting hay from treated sites, using manure from animals grazing on treated areas or rotating the treated area to sensitive crops. See the product label for details. State restrictions on the sale and use of Milestone and Opensight apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Cleantraxx is not registered for sale or use in all states. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state. Always read and follow label directions.

