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Nighttime spray application advice doesn't leave growers in the dark

MOORESVILLE, Indiana, May 26, 2015 – Weather-related planting delays have many growers burning the midnight oil to complete fieldwork, including chemical application. While spraying after sunset presents unique challenges, it can be as effective as daytime application.

Today's high-tech self-propelled sprayers make it possible for growers to protect their crops any time of day or night, said Jeremy Hurt, Senior Application Specialist for Equipment Technologies, manufacturer of Apache-brand sprayers.

"We're hearing that growers are having to use every minute of dry weather they can to work in their fields, and that is forcing many to spray at night," Hurt said. "But with the right equipment and application practices, growers can achieve the same coverage in no more time than it would take them during the day."

Hurt said auto guidance systems, precision boom leveling, spray section controls and lighting packages take on greater importance at night, when visibility is limited.

"With your GPS guidance your field computer will give you a line to follow so that you don't leave unapplied areas as the sprayer goes across the field," Hurt said. "It can be very difficult to rely on foam markers at night, because you might not be able to see those marks. If you don't have precision equipment, you're not going to do as good a job."



An Apache Sprayer with LED light package

Auto boom leveling and spray section controls, which are available in Apache sprayers, work in concert to keep booms the same height above the ground and chemical applications made on only those places where they are needed. Those precision systems are part of the Raven Industries™ and Trimble Navigation® field computers that are options with Apaches.

Hurt advised growers to check their computer settings ahead of night spraying, so that they can get in the field as soon as they climb into the cab. Every minute spent preparing to spray means another minute later finishing the job.

Lighting packages have advanced over the years, providing growers more than enough illumination on the field in front of them and booms behind. Apache, for example, offers a lighting package of 60 LED bulbs, located above the grille and cab, and next to the fill station. The lights are situated to reduce bounce-back reflection.

"The back lights shine on the product tank, as well as the booms," Hurt said. "Many times a sprayer's tank is white and the light reflects back into the cab. Apaches have gray tanks, which absorb a lot of that light."

LED bulbs have an average lifespan into the tens of thousands of hours.

Hurt offered these other nighttime spraying tips:

- Dim the precision control screen. "A lot of controllers have a big display screen, and they put off a lot of light. Most all of them have a night mode you can use that will dim the screen so that you don't get a lot of reflection," he said.
- Turn on flashers and beacon lights when driving on public roads.
- Perform preventative maintenance beforehand. "For example, you don't want to try greasing the booms in the dark," he said.
- Remain alert. "With all these precision tools the temptation might be to relax a little bit," he said. "But you still want to keep your eyes on what you're doing and know where you are going, because all the good precision in the world can't see a ditch or washed-out area coming up."

Above all, know when to stop for the night.

"Accidents are more likely to occur when you're tired," Hurt said. "Sometimes it's just best to go home, get some rest and start again first thing in the morning."

Equipment Technologies builds Apache self-propelled sprayers at its Mooresville assembly plant. The sprayers are marketed through a vast dealership network in the United States, Canada, Australia and Ukraine. Apaches come in three models: the 750-gallon AS720, 1,000-gallon AS1020/1025 and 1,200-gallon AS1220.

NOTE TO MEDIA: A publication-quality version of the photo that accompanies this news release is available here: www.etsprayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Grote-LED-side-and-back-sprayer.jpg. Other Apache Sprayer photos and graphics are available at <http://www.etsprayers.com/gallery/>. For additional information and interviews, contact Steve Leer at 317-210-7313 or steve.leer@etsprayers.com.