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Absolutely, positively must spray a wet field? Follow these tips to minimize risk

MOORESVILLE, Indiana, July 27, 2015 – You’ve waited and waited and waited for the field to dry, but it hasn’t. Now weeds are starting to take up residence in your crops. Do you risk soil compaction by bringing in your sprayer to apply herbicides, or keep holding out for better field conditions?

There’s no easy answer, said Jeremy Hurt, Senior Application Specialist for Equipment Technologies, manufacturer of Apache-brand self-propelled sprayers.

Excessive spring and early summer rain in parts of the United States and Canada has left growers with that difficult choice. If weed growth has overtaken a crop and a grower decides they must spray a field, there are ways to minimize crop and soil damage, Hurt said.

“One of the first things you’ll want to do is go with flotation tires,” he said. “You’ll need to choose between semi- or full floats, or duals.”

Flotation tires usually are rear-mounted. Semi- or full floats are wider than conventional farm tires and spread the weight of the sprayer over a larger area, reducing compactive force on the soil. Duals are twin sets of narrower tires mounted on the same axle. Together they create a weight dispersion benefit similar to floats.

“I think float tires probably do a little bit better in wet conditions than duals, even though you’ve got almost the same width,” Hurt said. “The bigger semi- or full float tires are harder to put on and take off compared to duals, where you just add another tire to each side. But with duals you’ll be a little wider and that makes transportation on roads a little tougher. And duals are not set up for crop rows, so you’ll have two sets of wheel tracks, which could cause crop damage.”

Another important factor when making applications on soggy fields is decisiveness.

“If you come to a big wet area you need to commit to either going through it or driving around it,” Hurt said. “You can’t go halfway and change your mind. That’s how sprayers get stuck.”

“Should you have to stop halfway through the field be sure to rinse the booms out so the strainers and nozzles don’t clog from the sprayer sitting.”

Compared to heavier hydrostat-type sprayers, the lighter weight and mechanical drive of Apache Sprayers make them less likely to bog down in mud and cause subsequent soil compaction. That is accomplished through the Apache’s unique construction, which places 70 percent of the sprayer’s weight over the rear tires and transfers 90 percent of its horsepower directly to the ground.

While Hurt never recommends driving a sprayer on muddy fields, there are times when weeds pose a greater threat than machinery.

“I’ve got a field of soybeans where I saw more grass and weeds than I saw beans,” he said. “I knew we had to get in there and spray.”

Founded in 1997, Equipment Technologies assembles Apaches at its Mooresville, Ind., plant. The privately owned company markets its sprayers through a vast dealership network in the United States, Canada, Australia and Ukraine.

Learn more about 2016 model Apaches by visiting the Equipment Technologies website, www.etsprayers.com.

NOTE TO MEDIA: A publication-quality version of the photo accompanying this news release is available at http://www.etsprayers.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/tmp13057_0108_1.jpg. Photos of 2016 model Apaches 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.



An Apache Sprayer glides across a wet cropfield