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In 2015 'resolve' to follow safe, cost-effective application practices

MOORESVILLE, Indiana, December 22, 2014 – Lose weight. Quit smoking. Exercise regularly. Spend more time with family. Get organized.

Seems everyone resolves to make changes in a new year. Farmers and custom applicators who spray crops should, too, said Jeremy Hurt, senior application specialist at Equipment Technologies, the manufacturer of Apache-brand self-propelled sprayers.

"As we approach the 2015 crop season there are several goals applicators can strive to reach," Hurt said. "I call them 'Good New Year's Spraying Resolutions.'"

The resolutions, and how to achieve them, are:

- **Decrease spray drift** – Herbicide drift can affect both a farmer's crops and his neighbor's crops. To reduce drift risk, always use the correct nozzle size on spray equipment based on the crop, field conditions and application speed. Spray boom leveling control also can help, by keeping booms at the optimum spray height.
- **Apply at the correct rate** – Make sure calibration numbers in field computers are correct to avoid under- or over-application. "You may want to recalibrate the flow meter or conduct a flow test to confirm accuracy," Hurt said. "Also, check the calibration of the speed signal you're using. You can perform a one-mile calibration test to see if the radar and speed sensor is providing an accurate reading."
- **Properly collect and use data** – Most field computers retain data on the field being sprayed, including application rate. But if left in the field the computer could start running slower, especially if corrupt files enter the system. It's best to transfer field computer data onto another computer or storage device, where it can be analyzed for improved application management.

- **Reduce spray overlap** – Guidance systems come in handy here, Hurt said. "Without guidance, the average overlap is 7 percent. A good guidance system with autosteer can reduce that to 1 percent," he said. "Foam markers have been in use for some time and work well, but newer GPS guidance and autosteer systems provide the most accuracy. Many can use terrain compensation to improve accuracy on hillsides."
- **Apply safely** – When mixing and applying chemicals, wear goggles, gloves and protective clothing. Chemical container labels include safety information and instructions for disposing of unused product and empty containers.
- **Accurately prepare tank mixes** – "You may think adding or subtracting an ounce here or there won't hurt anything, but it may affect your weed control and wallet in the long run," Hurt said. "Chemical product labels tell you the appropriate rate for the weed you are trying to control. Too little chemical could stunt the weed but not kill it, and even help that weed build resistance to that herbicide. Adding too much chemical means unnecessary expense and affects your bottom line. Also, be sure you know the difference between liquid ounces and dry ounces when mixing your product. And always use the measuring device that comes with the chemical to mix that chemical."

If applicators resolve to implement these best practices when spraying they'll reduce environmental and safety risks, save money and maximize yield potential, Hurt said.

Equipment Technologies builds Apache Sprayers at its Mooresville assembly plant and markets the sprayers through a vast dealership network in the United States, Canada, Australia and Ukraine. Apaches come in five models, ranging in size from the 750-gallon AS720 to the 1,200-gallon AS1220 and 1220 Plus II. All 2015 model Apaches come with an industry-leading five-year warranty.

Visit www.etsprayers.com for more information and a dealership locator.

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