

Leading for Ag Manufacturers on Government Regulations

Case Study: How AEM Worked with EPA to Refine DRT



The Background

The EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs' new Drift Reduction Technology (DRT) Registry allows sprayer manufacturers to voluntarily submit their drift reduction products for a star rating from the government. The ratings assess how effective spraying systems are at achieving drift reduction.

The Challenge

The EPA ratings could become increasingly influential in how they evaluate sprayers and pesticides. It is essential that EPA officials understand all the nuances and various technologies related to drift migration. In turn, sprayer manufacturers must understand how EPA will be taking product ratings into consideration when conducting risk assessments on pesticides.

The Solution

AEM established a Sprayer Leadership Group to develop industry solutions in addressing spray drift and related issues by coordinating efforts among manufacturers. AEM worked with the EPA on refining the DRT Program by bringing together EPA and its own Liquid Applications Equipment Technical Group to conduct research on drift models that represent real world applications of drift reduction technology.

At the 2015 Farm Progress Show, AEM organized a tour and Sprayer Leadership Group meeting for EPA officials. The tour showcased how manufacturers are motivated by market incentives to reduce drift, and the steps they are already taking to achieve reduction. In June 2016, AEM and the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) organized a field day at a University of Maryland research farm to demonstrate how manufacturers have implemented technologies to reduce spray drift, benefiting both their customers and the environment.

The Results

Multiple EPA staff said the events were *an eye-opening opportunity to see how manufacturers have voluntarily adopted sophisticated technology to reduce spray drift*. AEM was able to display a variety of its members' products and technology.

AEM and ARA partnered to produce two videos that captured the day's events to vividly convey to Capitol Hill, agency staff, and other stakeholders the work that equipment manufacturers are doing to reduce spray drift. The field day garnered media coverage in both ag industry and Capitol Hill publications.

The Opportunity

Producers who use higher rated equipment will have fewer use restrictions to contend with, such as reduced buffer strips. This advantage to farmers and ranchers could make the star ratings a key marketing point in the near future.

This effort is just one example of the agenda-setting steps AEM takes to act as a leader on behalf of farm equipment manufacturers and the millions of American farmers who depend on that equipment to run their business. From educating the EPA, fighting for a strong Renewable Fuel Standard, supporting crop insurance programs and a strong Farm Bill, AEM is here to advocate.



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Equipment makers seek to school EPA on drift reduction technology

On-farm technology is advancing faster than many lawmakers and regulators acknowledge. However, trade groups and some agribusinesses are trying to improve on that situation by taking regulators to the field.

About 30 officials from EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs got to see the latest in spray drift reduction technology at a Field Day earlier this month sponsored by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and Agricultural Retailers Association.

Held at the University of Maryland's Wye Research and Education Center in Queenstown, the event featured demonstrations of a variety of technologies designed to reduce pesticide drift.



Nick Truitt, AEM

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