

Treating submerged aquatic weeds with herbicide

About aquatic weed treatment

In Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) channels, submerged aquatic weeds such as ribbon weed, egeria, elodea and pond weeds can impede the flow of water, cause erosion and may cause water to flow over the banks.

Choked channels restrict the delivery of irrigation water to customers.

How does GMW control submerged aquatic weeds?

GMW uses the herbicide Acrolein to control submerged aquatic weeds. Acrolein is only used very sparingly and as a last resort to maintain the capacity of the irrigation channels.

Why use Acrolein?

Acrolein has been used around the world for the control of submerged weeds since 1960. Currently there are no alternatives to this product in Australia, however GMW and other agencies are attempting to register an alternative herbicide.

There is no interruption to the supply of irrigation water. Water treated with Acrolein can be used at any time for irrigation. The capacity of the channel is restored within a few days after treatment.

With the exception of irrigation, treated water must not be used for any other purpose (stock & domestic or recreational purposes) until 48 hours after a treatment has ceased.

Acrolein breaks down quickly (within 72 hours) to inert bi-products (water and carbon dioxide) and does not produce residue.

How is Acrolein applied?

Acrolein is applied from a 200 litre cylinder housed in a tandem purpose built trailer. Typically, the dispensing trailer is located at a water regulator and a weighted delivery line is placed into the water. The herbicide is injected into the water over a 4-8 hour period.

What are the precautions for the use of Acrolein?

You will be notified by a GMW if Acrolein is to be used in a channel near your property or residence.

Acrolein can be dangerous. The application system is designed as a “closed system” so there is no exposure to the environment except when injected into the water.

Trained and skilled GMW staff will be in attendance when a treatment is taking place. It is important take heed of the “keep out” signage and stay well away from the treatment area.

GMW has a duty of care to notify those located in the vicinity of a treatment site of the potential dangers.

In the unlikely event that Acrolein vapour is produced, a strong acid odour may be produced.

If you can smell such an odour, please go indoors, close doors and windows and phone GMW on 1800 013 357. Residents may be required to follow evacuation orders, should they be made by GMW personnel.

Acrolein is toxic to aquatic life. It is possible that fish and yabbies may die as a result of an Acrolein treatment.

GMW is required to retain treated irrigation water within the irrigation system (channels or drains) or on farm until 72 hours after the treatment ceases.

If treated water is to be used for other purposes, it must not be released for at least 48 hours after the treatment has ceased.

How is produce affected?

Metabolic studies in animals and plants indicate that Acrolein does not accumulate in animal or plant tissue, therefore there is no withholding period for produce.

In a soil metabolism study, the half-life of Acrolein was found to be 4.2 hours in soil water mixtures and was ultimately transformed into carbon dioxide.

What can I do?

Do not allow stock access to treated water until 48 hours after the treatment has ceased.

Water can be used for irrigation at any time.

If you can smell a strong acid odour go indoors and phone GMW on 1800 013 357.