

## **Chateau WDG Herbicide**

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Valent recently received EPA approval for Chateau WDG herbicide on strawberry. Chateau is good news, but berry growers need to proceed with a degree of caution as we all learn more about just how this product fits into matted-row and plasticulture systems in the north. The supplemental label for Chateau (EPA Reg'n # 59639-119) authorizes Pre-Transplant applications to new plantings, late-fall or early-spring applications to established dormant plantings, and shielded sprayer applications to row middles once the crop emerges from dormancy. Reading between the lines (if it's not obvious), Chateau burns non-dormant strawberry leaves and fruits, thus the need for caution.

This registration is one that calls for some careful on-farm grower experimentation while we work out the crop safety considerations. Right now the early-spring application is the one of greatest current interest to growers as well as the one of greatest concern because of potential for crop injury. Regardless, I've already consulted with one who intends to use Chateau on his established fields because of severe weed problems – if this applies to you, listen up. If your weed problem justifies it, apply Chateau as soon as you remove the mulch. The longer mulch is left on the crop, the more sensitive-new-growth will be developed. Delaying Chateau application after mulch removal will further the development of new growth, all of which will be burnt off by the herbicide. Don't be surprised if your field temporarily looks like you sprayed with Gramoxone, but don't despair. Based on experience in research plots with similar herbicides such as Goal and Blazer the crop will quickly recover and within a couple of weeks you will not likely be able to tell the difference between sprayed and unsprayed areas. In trials with Goal applications immediately after mulch-removal, crop-yield was unaffected although earliness was delayed by 2 or 3 days.

Chateau is also registered Pre-Transplant. The supplemental label states that Pre-Transplant should only be used when berry plants are transplanted into plastic mulch. However, Valent Company representatives have told me that is incorrect, and Pre-Transplant applications are safe to standard matted-row plantings on bare ground as well. Regardless of matted-row or plasticulture system, Chateau must be applied 30 days before planting.

Chateau is applied at 3 oz/A and is primarily a soil-active, residual herbicide, meaning it mainly controls weeds during emergence and control of sensitive weeds is extended for several weeks following application. Preemergence control of a wide-spectrum of broadleaf weeds can be expected including pigweeds, mustards, jimsonweed and nightshades, lambsquarters, marestail, mallow, and chickweed. Some emerged broadleaf weeds will be suppressed and control will be improved by including crop oil concentrate at 1% or non ionic surfactant at 0.25% of final spray volume.

Potential users of Chateau should obtain a supplemental label, as the strawberry use is not yet listed on the Section 3 label. The supplemental label can be obtained on the Internet at the Valent Web Site (<http://www.valent.com/>), or from crop-protection dealers.