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Maximizing Sericea Control

Sericea lespedeza is a tough one. Drought tolerant. Vigorous root systems. Plenty of seed production that can last in the soil for a long time. Thinking about 'control' can be overwhelming, but it can be slightly less so if you consider some best management practices.

Apply to actively growing plants. Actively growing means it's growing well *now* with the ability to *continue* good growth after application. If plants are not actively growing (new leaves early in the season; buds/blooms later), delay applications until better conditions resume.

Consult product labels for appropriate carrier gallonages with a few rules of thumb in mind:

- Use a minimum of three gallons per acre by air (increasing to five gallons for denser populations.
- Use a minimum of 10 gallons per acre for ground applications, with increases to as much as 20 gallons per acre for dense stands.
- Spot treatment applications should cover plants with solution – without it dripping off.

Read labels for application timing recommendations. Products containing triclopyr or fluroxypyr are often suggested for use during vegetative growth/prior to bloom or may call for higher rates at later plant growth stages. The metsulfuron products may allow for later applications, and some active ingredients have no activity at all against sericea. Choose the right product at the right time for optimal results.

Don't discount integrated management approaches. Grazing (typically with goats) can help reduce seed production. Mowing, followed by herbicides, can increase control by allowing application to more tender regrowth. In native grass systems, fire at different times of the year can either help suppress seed production (late summer) or increase seed germination to produce plants more easily controlled by herbicide applications later.

Know your resources. There's an entire page in the 2026 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide dedicated to the control of sericea lespedeza. Pick up a copy at any District Office or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu and I'll send you a link. Local Noxious Weed Departments are also a great resource, with information on everything from products and rates to adjuvants and timing.