



Best Practice Guidance Note: Equipment Testing.

EU legislation changes have introduced, as a minimum, mandatory testing of pesticides application equipment, on a cycle starting at 5 years and then changing to every 3 years.

However, “Best Practice”, where we look at voluntarily going one step further than the law requires, dictates that we consider equipment testing at more frequent intervals.

With regard to boom spraying equipment and other similar vehicle mounted sprayers – examples being: tractor boom sprayers and quad mounted sprayers – “Best Practice” would be to get your equipment tested every 12 months, using the services of a NSTS (National Sprayer Testing Scheme) registered company. As an absolute minimum you should be looking at once every 2 years.

This need not be expensive – a typical quad based sprayer unit will cost around £90.00 to test and a typical 6 to 12 metre boom sprayer will come in around £150.00 (based on 2009/10 prices).

Things become a little more complicated when we get to handheld spraying equipment:

1. With CDA type equipment (examples: Nomix and Riverlynx), it is “Best Practice” to get these serviced and checked every 12 months, usually by the manufacturer/distributor. This is worthwhile since equipment such as this - that use electric motors, tend to become less reliable if not regularly serviced.
2. With knapsack type hydraulic sprayers, it can be hard to justify the expense of annual testing, when a new sprayer can be bought for only a little more. However, replacement of such sprayers every year is not an environmentally sound decision. The best option with knapsack sprayers and similar equipment is to make sure that operators are trained and regularly updated in their calibration, maintenance and repair. They can then be inspected and maintained on a regular basis by these operators, leading to more efficient pesticide use, less leaks and other malfunctions, plus a greater understanding from the operators about how their application equipment works.

In summary – five points for “BEST PRACTICE” equipment use:

1. ALL vehicle-mounted and trailed sprayers should be serviced and NSTS tested every 12 months.

2. Change nozzles regularly – ideally annually, plus more often if calibration points to nozzle wear or the nozzle tips looked damaged – inspect nozzles EVERY time you use the sprayer.
3. CDA type equipment should be serviced and checked every 12 months by the manufacturer/distributor.
4. Knapsack type equipment should be inspected regularly and serviced/maintained on a rolling basis by competent operators.
5. ALWAYS be certain that your spraying equipment is applying the rate of pesticide that it should be.

