



Many producers and some rural merchandise sales people are getting “over excited” about the availability of low priced generic triclopyr+picloram products.

These generic formulations are based on the original Grazon™ DS formulation, which only contains triclopyr+picloram. In recent years, Grazon DS was superseded by **Dow AgroSciences** with **Grazon Extra**, which contains **triclopyr+picloram plus the new highly active product called aminopyralid**. Aminopyralid is an extremely active ingredient at relatively low concentrations. It has been shown in many trials, that the addition of the aminopyralid enhances the herbicide activity on weeds previously covered on the old Grazon DS label as well as increases the number of weeds that can now be reliably controlled with a single herbicide treatment of Grazon Extra.

You should realise that generic triclopyr+picloram products are not equal to Grazon Extra, so don't think you are getting Grazon Extra in a generic drum. They are different.

My strong advice to clients considering spraying major woody weed problems this summer is to STOP and think about their woody weed control program very carefully before grabbing the “cheap” generic product. There is a saying in life, which tends to hold true in the overwhelming majority of situations, “*you only get what you pay for*” and I think this could readily apply in this situation.

■ Let's Analyse the Situation

Currently generic formulations of triclopyr+picloram are retailing at around \$460-480/20 L, while the premium new generation product Grazon Extra is selling at around \$660-680/20 L. Table 1 highlights the current cost (Dec 2011) of the various products.

Yes on first appearances the generic looks like a good buy, with a saving of \$200/drum. But in woody weed control programs, the decision of what product to buy **“should not be based on the cost of a drum of chemical” but on the reliability of results that can be achieved at recommended rates of application.** The cost per drum is a misleading measure of results. From my experience, the reliability of results is **paramount** when one commits to a woody weed control program, often in difficult terrain, during the summer months.

My experience is that producers don't mind spending the money on a herbicide product if they are more assured of getting a desired or guaranteed result. What they do hate is spending the money on a cheaper product, then having mixing and formulation problems or not getting the result they could have achieved. As then the cheap product just became an expensive exercise !!!!!

■ Research Provides Confidence

Dow AgroSciences, the producers of the original Grazon DS and now Grazon Extra, is continually undertaking major field research programs testing their new products against competitive products, (including many of the generic copies of their original formulations). Their research has repeatedly shown that **Grazon Extra** delivers extra weed kill results, on tough woody weeds like Blackberry, St John's Wort and Lantana, when compared to the older superseded Grazon DS formulation and generic copies.

Trial work on blackberry over 2 years of assessment has shown that 350 mL and 500 mL/100 L of Grazon Extra will consistently deliver superior results to Grazon DS/Generic formulations at 500 mL/100 L. The addition of the aminopyralid in Grazon Extra is significantly enhancing weed kills on many of our tough weeds. Table 1.

TABLE 1:

Product	Mix rate /100 L	Cost per 100 L of mix	Av Control of blackberry at 25 months after treatment from 2 replicated trials
Generic product type (triclopyr+picloram)	500 mL	\$12.00	52
Grazon Extra Triclopyr+picloram+aminopyralid	350 mL	\$11.90	77
Grazon Extra Triclopyr+picloram+aminopyralid	500 mL	\$17.00	96

Ask yourself do you want around 80-100% kill or 50-60% kill. In my opinion, you are much better off, buying a quality guaranteed product, and getting the results.

Grazon Extra will deliver superior control compared to a generic triclopyr+picloram product. Grazon Extra at 350 mL/100 L is cheaper than a generic at 500 mL/100 L, and provides superior control. Grazon Extra at the 500 mL/100 L rate produced very high control levels.

If you are driven by cost alone, then use Grazon Extra at the lower label rate. If you driven by results, then use the higher recommended rate of Grazon Extra.



■ Getting Results is critical.

No one wants to use a product that runs the risk of not delivering results, having mixing and formulation problems and no technical back up/ support. Woody weed spraying, under typical summer conditions is not the most pleasant task, and one wants to know that when you go, or if you are paying a spray contractor to put the effort in, that you will get the high weed kill results you are expecting.

For my money I want results. I would use Grazon Extra at 350-500 mL/100 L and feel confident that the results will be superior to that of the cheap generic formulations. I would also prefer to use the higher application rate of the Grazon Extra to provide some added "insurance" in spray coverage ie if you use the higher mix rate and you don't get the full coverage you have still got a better chance of a good kill with the higher rate than using a lower rate or certainly the generics.

■ Labour/Time and Equipment is a bigger cost.

The cost of the chemical in a woody weed spray program can often be a minor part of the total cost. In treating woody weeds, few producers consider the labour/equipment cost to treat such weed problems. Contractor spraying costs or even your own time and equipment costs can be a far more significant part of the cost of a woody weed program.

For a typical woody weed spraying job, **the time and labour costs account for more than 50% of the cost of treating woody weeds and is often 60-70% of the treatment cost.** When spraying woody weeds like blackberry and St John's Wort, there is a considerable time and labour required, in moving around the weed sites and the farm, walking around hillsides, pulling hoses around through weeds, timber, rocks etc, refilling and mixing, travelling to and from water supply etc.

For example, a single man spraying blackberry might work for say 10 hours in a day and put out say 3000 litres of mix in that time. The contractor labour, equipment and travel costs will be around \$700-750 per day. The chemical cost for this 3000 L of mix is around \$360 if we used the low rate of Grazon Extra or the generic at full label rates.

So in this example the chemical cost is around 33% of the treatment cost, while labour is 67% of the cost. In simple terms labour is two thirds of your treatment cost. Why would you run the risk of using a possible inferior woody weed product, when the time and effort of spraying the wood weed is your biggest single cost.

Even if we used the high rate of Grazon Extra the chemical cost for this day treatment would be around \$500 or 40% of the cost, while the labour cost is 60% of the cost of the spray program. Labour is a more significant cost than chemical. The more your day of spraying, is about scouting and treating weeds, the more important the labour/time cost becomes and less important the chemical cost becomes.

Now every woody weed spray job will involve different amounts of chemical and labour/effort, so you are encouraged to carefully analyse your situation. Even if you or one of your farm staff are spraying your woody weeds, there is a cost for you to do that, in your labour value and the cost of purchasing, operating vehicles and spray gear. Many producers prefer to get in specialist spray contractors for woody weed work, because they know its hard work and usually unpleasant, particularly with summer spraying conditions.

■ My advice to you

- *Buy the guaranteed quality herbicide, eg Grazon Extra.*
- *Avoid using generic products due to known formulation issues and possible lower content of active ingredient and formulation stability.*
- *Buy the products from the companies that do the research and development to provide us with new herbicides and solutions to our pest problems. Dow AgroSciences is a leader in woody weed products, and spends considerable funds undertaking research and development within Australia. They fully guarantee the integrity and quality of their products and what they will deliver. They back the product they produce.*
- *Mix at the recommended rate, and preferably use the upper rate on the label.*
- *Apply thoroughly to the woody weed target, good coverage ensures good results.*
- *Use safety gear when mixing and applying ag chemicals.*
- *Be aware of herbicide spray drift risk and damage to sensitive crops, pastures and native vegetation, especially when applying these products under summer conditions.*



Ross Watson assessing blackberries