



Grain Crops Update

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Bird Repellent Exemption for Corn Planting

Bird Repellent Exemption - The EPA has granted the Mississippi Department of Agriculture a Section 18 exemption allowing the use of anthraquinone (Avipel™) for the purpose of repelling blackbirds, grackles and crows in newly planted field or sweet corn in the state of Mississippi. Avipel's active ingredient is a natural, non-lethal compound proven to repel birds. Avipel is available for use on corn seed as either a liquid or dry formulation. The liquid formulation has demonstrated very reliable performance on large avian species, such as cranes, and is the preferred formulation for high bird pressure fields, but does require commercial seed treating prior to planting. The dry formulation offers growers the convenience and speediness of hopper-box treatment, but its effectiveness is dependent upon thorough seed coverage and gentle handling. For example, performance of the dry material may not be as good as the liquid form when used in planters with air or vacuum seed metering systems, because the air circulation may remove some of the product from seeds before planting. The use of supplemental dry lubricant on the corn seed may also reduce Avitec seed coverage and/or adherence of the dry formulation, and subsequent repellency.

Figure 1. Mississippi growers may use Avipel to reduce blackbird depredation in corn fields.



Figure 2. A red-winged blackbird extracts young corn seedlings from a Mississippi field. Damaged or extracted plants are evident from the turned soil crust near the row.



Figure 3. Blackbirds and other ground-feeding bird species can cause significant stand loss in Mississippi corn fields. This damage will reduce crop productivity and may necessitate replanting when severe crop damage occurs. Damage is often more extensive in early corn plantings.



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