February 19, 2025

Dear FMC,

On behalf of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and lowbush (wild) blueberry producers in Maine, I request an extension of the 24C label for Express herbicide (tribenuron-methyl) for use on broadleaf weeds in wild blueberry fields. The existing 24C label expired on December 31, 2025.

Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis)* is a low growing woody weed in wild blueberry fields that is difficult to manage. Tribenuron-methyl is the only efficacious product for this species that I am aware of. Bunchberry grows via rhizomes and underneath the blueberry canopy competing with wild blueberry for space, nutrients and water. This weed is a particular nuisance for growers who harvest berries for fresh pack sales. When raking blueberries in a bunchberry patch, the bunchberry leaves crush blueberries. Additionally, the bunchberry berries are a similar size to blueberries and get harvested requiring close attention to removal in the processing building. Through my Extension program, growers are encouraged to identify weeds in their fields and use cultural methods of weed management including sulfur application and mechanical weed removal before using chemical control. Bunchberry is one of the weeds that escapes our cultural methods of weed management and applications of other herbicide products. Express is a group 2 herbicide and therefore fills an important rotational niche, reducing the risk of resistance development. The UMaine Extension herbicide chart, which contains 16 products, only contains two Group 2 products (Express tribenuron-methyl and Sandea halosulfuron-methyl).

As requested by the Maine Board of Pesticide Control, in 2019 I led an effort to test well water before and after Express application in collaboration with the blueberry industry. Three wells located in wild blueberry fields were selected for repeated well water testing. Each of the three wells were sampled on May 21st (before application), August 7th and October 29th, 2019. No tribenuron-methyl was detected in any sample. Samples were tested by the University of Massachusetts Pesticide Analysis Laboratory.

I support the extension of the Express 24C label for lowbush blueberry in Maine.

Sincerely,

Lily Calderwood, PhD
University of Maine
Extension Wild Blueberry Specialist, Associate Professor of Horticulture