

Naming the ‘Cides that Poison and Kill...Revisited

Taking a closer look at names chemical companies give their pesticide products

By Natalie Lounsbury

Nearly 20 years ago, the staff at Beyond Pesticides, then NCAMP, put together a list of pesticide trade names in order to get a peek into the psyche of pesticide producers and their intended audience. Although their prediction that new age marketing executives would start focusing on a “kinder, gentler” image for pesticides was partially true, war, machismo, and animal images have remained popular.

Clearly intended to create an image, whether it be of bravado, violent nature or perfect harmony, the names chosen sometimes don’t make logical sense... but then again, neither do pesticides.

Food Chain Confusion

For example, here are some herbicides that have led us to believe that the pesticide industry may be a little confused about the food chain and who eats what...

■ **Python WDG** (herbicide) from Dow AgroSciences: Nothing says “kill your weeds” like the name of a constricting snake. Pythons are carnivorous animals that eat primarily rodents, and would have a difficult time consuming broadleaf weeds.

■ **Cobra** (herbicide) from Valent U.S.A.: If you can not get a constricting snake to kill your weeds, why not try a venomous one? Although cobras have a different diet than pythons, broadleaf weeds also have no place on their plate.

■ **Raptor** (herbicide) from BASF: Has anyone ever seen a red tailed hawk swoop in to kill some witchgrass or wild radish?

■ **Scorpion III** (herbicide) from Dow AgroSciences: Scorpions eat insects, not weeds. Perhaps Dow is referring to this mixture’s (clopyralid, 2,4-D and flumetsulam) toxic effect on beneficial insects? Or maybe the name is an allusion to how the pesticide can just stick around in unexpected places (like in your shoes—remember to shake them out!).

Shootin’ Down the Weeds

Along with these animals, a whole arsenal (yes, Arsenal is also the name of an herbicide) of weaponry exists to kills weeds. Among the options are:

■ **Shotgun** (herbicide) from Loveland Products: Shotguns send out multiple shots at one time. In aiming for weeds, the toxic combination of 2,4-D and atrazine affects much more than just the target species and wreaks havoc on multiple levels including aquatic life and humans.

■ **Bullet** (herbicide) from Monsanto: Were

we to use bullets to attack our herbaceous foes, along with probably being unsuccessful, we would leave a toxic trail of lead contamination. This herbicide does not contain lead, but instead leaves a toxic trail of cancer-causing alachlor and endocrine-disrupting atrazine.

■ **Revolver** (herbicide) from Bayer: The gun that made Russian Roulette famous is, in some ways, an appropriate name for what we are doing with pesticides—never really knowing which ones are going to cause irreparable harm, chemical companies just keep firing them into the world...

Oldies but Goodies

Many of the products on the original list from NCAMP still exist. We have listed our favorites below.

■ **The Battlefield:** Ambush, Brigade, Bombardier, Squadron, Broadstrike, Battalion, Salute, Marksman

■ **Cowboys and Indians:** Roundup, Gaucho, Stirrup, Lasso, Stampede

■ **Phallic Images and Brawn:** Ramrod, Bicep

■ **Violent Weather:** Cyclone, Tornado, Storm, Lightning

■ **Animals:** Cougar, Hornet, Bison, Talon, Rhino

■ **Good Feelings and Wholesomeness:** Asana, Harmony, Total, Impower, Genesis, Accord, Assure, Prosper, Habitat

