

BTN of OREGON
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES

May 8, 2019

My name is Ben Stone, a second-generation Christmas tree farmer from Marion County. BTN was started by Mike Stone 61 years ago and grown to sustain our whole family. Today myself Ben, with my wife Lisa and two brothers Tyler, and Nathan continue the farm as the second generation of Christmas Tree farmers. I write today in opposition to House Bill 2619, the banning of chlorpyrifos.

Lorsban Advanced is the chemical of most interest to my family Christmas tree farming operation. Lorsban is the only defense we have against Douglas fir needle midge. The needle midge lays its eggs under the bud cap of the Douglas fir in springtime just as bud swell is taking place. If not controlled the eggs hatch and the larva eat on the tender undeveloped needles. Once the needles emerge from the caps and begin to grow the damage presents itself. This damage makes the trees of lesser quality at best and most likely unsaleable. Our company does a large amount of exporting to Mexico. If any amount of Needle midge damage is present at the border inspection station the load will be rejected.

Lorsban doesn't currently have Christmas trees on its label, and thus we have been issued a 24-C from the ODA since there are no other chemicals on the market that will control these pests. If we are to lose Lorsban, Douglas fir will become almost impossible to grow as a Christmas tree.

Christmas tree farmers are in an uphill battle against the fake trees. To get our Oxygen producing, job-creating, natural product to market, we need some of these chemical tools.

Practicing good stewardship of the land is essential to the sustainability of our business. We know that if we cause damage to our greatest resource that it won't be here for our future or the future of our successors. When it comes to the application of any chemical products, we strictly adhere to the motto of "the label is the law." If conditions and or equipment are not up to standards, we don't spray.

As Christmas tree farmers we have multiple fields with many neighbors. We strive to be good neighbors, notify them of when and what we are spraying. This allows them time to put horses in the barn, cover bee hives the night before or move anything out of potential harm's way. Working together we have been able to avoid detrimental problems. This method of full disclosure when it comes to spray applications proved to be extremely effective when we once had a field with an adjoining neighbor by the name of Harry Vanderpool. To those who don't know Harry is a local beekeeper in south Salem. Harry and I have been able to communicate back and forth about the timing and use of Lorsban around his bee hives without harm to his crop and successful control of pest on ours.

Lorsban applications can be done successfully if we work in cooperation with one another, follow the rules, and spray as needed and not by a date on a calendar.

Please allow us to continue to responsibly use Lorsban on our Christmas tree farms and stop house bill 2619.

Thank you,

Ben Stone

BTN of Oregon Inc.