

Survey of Metolachlor in China 2022

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Abstracts

Metolachlor is a selective herbicide with a broad weeding spectrum, high effectiveness and wide application fields. According to statistics from the Institute for the Control of Agrochemicals, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China (ICAMA), as of Jan. 2023, a total of 170 valid registrations of metolachlor have been licensed in China, including 18 for technical, 75 for single formulations and 77 for mixed formulations.

The metolachlor capacity increased from 34,000 t/a in 2017 to 37,000 t/a in 2018, yet dipped to 29,800 t/a during 2019–2020 and increased slightly to 30,800 t/a in 2021–2022. The output of metolachlor technical declined overall from 30,000 tonnes in 2017 to 9,700 tonnes in 2021, while it bounced back to 14,600 tonnes in 2022.

Metolachlor products made in China are export-oriented. The export volume of metolachlor (calculated by 97% technical) in China increased to about 27,225 tonnes in 2017. After a plummet in 2019, it increased from about 12,543 tonnes in 2020 to about 19,605 tonnes in 2021. Though some increase was witnessed in 2021, the export volume was still at a low level compared with that in 2017 and 2018.

Regarding metolachlor price in China, in 2017–2020, though the annual average ex-works price of 97% metolachlor technical in 2018 increased, prices of both metolachlor technical and metolachlor formulations were on a general decrease. Specifically, the annual average ex-works price of 97% metolachlor technical fell from USD3,418/t in 2019 to USD3,309/t in 2020, the lowest annual price in 2017–2022. In 2020–2022, and then saw a surge to USD7,941/t in 2022.

In China, metolachlor technical is applied on crops through single formulations of 720g/L EC and 960g/L EC and mixtures of the product with bensulfuron-methyl, atrazine and mefenacet. And metolachlor is mainly applied to corn, vegetables, soybean

and some other cash crops in China. In 2022, the consumption volume of metolachlor technical in China decreased for the first time since 2017, dropping by 0.66% year on year to 3,498 tonnes, and the consumption of metolachlor technical in corn and vegetables accounted for more than 60% of the total consumption in China.

Because of draconian environmental inspection at home and increasing production costs, the supply of metolachlor technical in China has been relatively tight in 2022. Thanks to increasing demand abroad, it is predicted that the output of metolachlor technical in China will increase in 2023–2025 and then decrease in 2026–2027. But it's unlikely to see too much increase in both supply and demand in China during 2023–2027.

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