Herbaceous Weed Control (Banding)

PURPOSE & WHERE APPLICABLE: Herbicides are used to control weed growth the first year after planting seedlings to increase survival and growth. Herbaceous weed control by banding is primarily conducted in pastures and light semi-open fields. However, this method can also be used on cutover tracts where adequate site preparation has been conducted.

HERBICIDE SELECTION: Herbicides are site specific as each herbicide is best suited for a particular purpose on a given site. Factors influencing the suitability of a herbicide are: type of vegetation to be controlled, species and age of the tree to be oversprayed, soil type, time of year, proximity to a stream, sensitivity of surrounding areas to damage from herbicides, and cost. The primary herbicides used in banding operations are imazapyr (Arsenal) and sulfometuron methyl (Oust). Other chemicals may be added to the tank mix to broaden the control of undesirable plant species. Always follow the label directions for mixing, handling, application and disposal of chemicals and containers as any use of a herbicide in a manner inconsistent with the labeling is a violation of federal law. For the proper herbicide or mix for a site, consult with a pesticide applicator certified by the State of Texas. All practices performed should follow Texas Best Management Practices for Forestry and have no adverse effect on threatened or endangered species or habitat.

DESCRIPTION: Application is normally conducted between April-May with the effectiveness reduced after June 1. Spraying should be avoided when rainfall is expected within 6 hours of application. Bands are applied using rubber-tired tractors, ATV’s, or backpack sprayers. Rubber tired tractors are equipped with rear-mounted spray tanks and booms with adjustable nozzles for treating several rows simultaneously. ATV’s with rear-mounted tanks are also commonly used but normally spray only one row at a time. Backpack sprayers are sometimes used when acreage, tract location, or other factors make the use of other equipment impractical. Herbicides are generally applied in 3-4 foot wide bands. 4-foot bands or wider are preferred as encroachment of herbaceous material is delayed longer than with more narrow bands.

BENEFITS: Application of herbicide by banding reduces competition between the newly planted seedlings and established herbaceous weeds and grasses. Water and nutrients within the banded row that would otherwise have been utilized by the herbaceous material become available to the pines. While first year survival and growth still depend upon spring rains, summer weather and the quality of the planting operation, it is significantly improved through the use of this practice.

COST: Approximately $35.00-$45.00 per acre for openland banding and $40.00-$60.00 per acre for wildland banding. Costs vary depending upon tract size, location, availability of vendors, chemical costs, etc.

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