

We still need herbicides to secure the tracks.

How to deal with the current legislation ?

The experience from Infrabel

By Jean-Pierre DEFORET, engineer in Chemistry

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What the legislation or the authorities impose:

- **A global reduction of the use of chemicals**
- **A complete or a partial ban in protected areas** (water catchments, Natura 2000...).
- **Buffer zones** round water courses, drains, schools, hospitals...
- **A data management and reporting** for each treatment
- **Apply or test alternative methods**
- **Only use chemicals approved for railway use** = very limited list
- Avoid or ban chemicals with danger symbols X or T
- **Glyphosate** could be banned by some regions

The actual legislation in Belgium

The national action plan for the reduction in the use of herbicides (NAPAN) between the 3 regions (environment) and the national authority (agreement of herbicides and phytolicesences) = **4 authorities**

- **Need of a coordinated answer** from Infrabel and SNCB
- Infrabel works under a system of exemptions in Flemish region.
We are in discussion with the other regions
- **A data management system (weed mapping) is suitable** to obtain an exemption
- Only **targeted sprays** are accepted.
- **Many protected areas** (water catchment, Natura 2000..) with specific methods or chemicals.

What the press says from us :

- “ Railways are using **toxic train**” .
- “**Railway don't care** about the quantities we spray”.
- “**Railways are the worst pupils** among the public companies, most cities have banned herbicides why not the railways?”
- “Railways are **against change**”
- “Railways are **still using glyphosate**, a supposed hazardous chemical”



- **We need to guarantee full safety** along the tracks as well for the customers as for our railway operators and this WITH or WITHOUT chemicals.

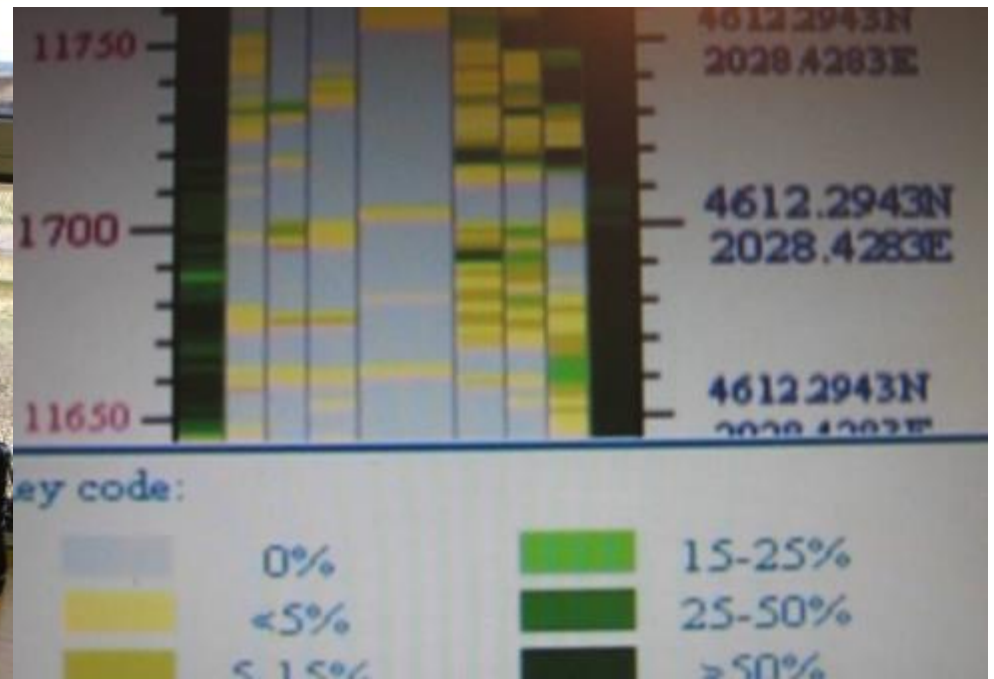
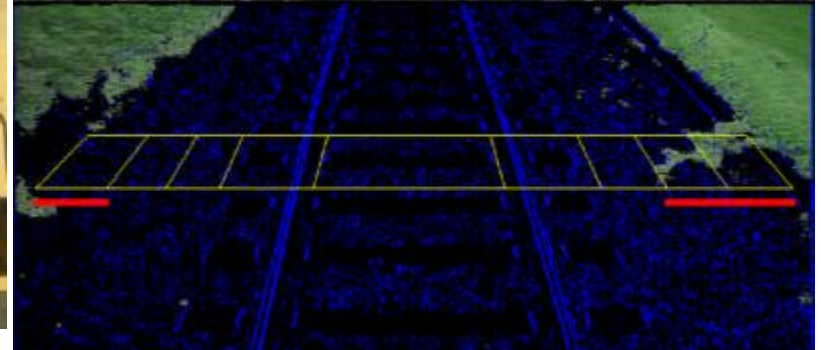
According to our experience the use of chemicals appears to be the most efficient and rational way of treatment.

- **There are no real comparison between a track and a road or any other kind of public areas.** Tracks = less accessibility, ballast, cables, trains running at high speed during treatments...

Ban on chemicals is much more complicated for the railway

- **Railways use sophisticated trains** for a safer and better controlled use of chemicals.

We do care about our methods and chemicals used : NEXT SLIDE



- **Compare quantities of used herbicides between campaigns is NOT a good criteria** especially for trains using a weed detection system.

However for many stakeholder it always appears as the main point of attack against us.

- **In Europe Glyphosate was in fact imposed or was supported by the authorities** since 1998 as having a “environmental friendly” profile.

Some railway companies were then facing a total ban of chemicals except for the Glyphosate

- We do feel concerned about the problematic and we try to find the best solution via the UIC

How to manage the current situation

- 1) **Stay confident in ourselves** : we have a useful experience and we know precisely our needs and constraints.
- 2) **Share our experiences** and knowledges
- 3) **Have a maintenance policy** based on UIC recommendations.
- 3) **Tracability of each treatment**
- 4) **Have a rational approach about the reduction** in the use of chemicals. What kind of reductions ???? Quantities ? Surfaces ? Kind of chemical ? Toxicology ?... How to measure ?

5) **Being pragmatic about the list of protected areas.**

Relevance , feasibility, what kind of alternatives...

6) **Being pragmatic when reporting.** Report What ?

Report to Who ?

7) Need to be prepared about official communication.

How to deal with claims?

How to reply parliamentary questions?...