



ALASKA RAILROAD

Track & Yard Vegetation Management: Chemical Control

- The Alaska Railroad has been unsuccessful in controlling vegetation to regulatory standards through the use of non-chemical means alone. A combination of chemical and non-chemical methods is needed to efficiently and economically control plant growth along the 500 miles of main track, more than 50 miles of sidings and spur track and within the nearly 100 miles of yard track.
- Vegetation control with regulated and common agricultural weed killers, applied by licensed companies, is the industry standard throughout the United States and abroad.
- Chemical agents proposed for use by the Alaska Railroad are approved by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for vegetation management. The EPA water-approved general use herbicide is AquaMaster® (active ingredient glyphosate) and the surfactant used to evenly spread AquaMaster® is AgriDex®.
- Chemical vegetation control would give the Alaska Railroad the additional assistance it needs to comply with federal regulatory safety requirements regarding vegetation management.
- The Alaska Railroad has spent millions of dollars over the past 10 years to rebuild and modernize aging track and infrastructure, and it is in the public's interest to protect this investment. Chemical vegetation control, in conjunction with non-chemical control, is far more effective for preventing track and ballast deterioration.
- The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) approved a two-year herbicide use permit. In 2010, AquaMaster and AgriDex were applied within the Seward Yard and along 30 miles of track between Seward and Indian with good results. In 2011, ARRC is applying for additional herbicide permits for use in the Anchorage Yard, Healy Yard, Fairbanks Yard and along the Eielson Branch.



Ineffective mechanical / manual vegetation control in the Seward Yard prior to herbicide application.



Post herbicide control near Seward. Note the clear distinction at the herbicide control area boundary at the end of the ties.

Bottom Line: Vegetation Control = Risk Control

