TENNESSEE FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

June 3, 2024

Mr. Charles Smith
Director, Registration Division
Office of Pesticide Programs
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20460-0001

Re: Docket No. EPA-HQ-OPP-2024-0154-0001

Dear Director Smith:

The Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation (TFBF) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the registration of a low-volatility dicamba formulation for use in Xtend® Technology or XtendFlex® Technology (dicamba-tolerant soybean) and XtendFlex® Technology (dicamba-tolerant cotton) submitted by Bayer CropScience. With over 695,000 members, TFBF is the largest general farm organization in Tennessee, representing the varied commodity producers across the state. Our policy is developed through a grassroots network of farmer members who identify, research, deliberate, vote on, and adopt policies on various issues related to agriculture and rural living, including responsible use of crop protection products. On behalf of our member producers, we support the registration of these critical over-the-top dicamba products for Tennessee's soybean and cotton producers.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee producers planted 1.6 million acres of soybeans and 265,000 acres of cotton across the state in 2023, amounting to a total of $1.25 billion in economic value[1]. Each year, around 90% of the soybeans and cotton planted in the state use Xtend® technology. Cotton and soybean growers need the over-the-top (OTT) low volatility dicamba products to combat post-emergence broadleaf weed pressures, such as glyphosate-resistant palmer amaranth, and protect their crop yields. Without these OTT dicamba products, growers would be left with no viable options to address post emergence weeds.

[1] "2023 State Agriculture Overview." *USDA – National Agricultural Statistics Service*; USDA/NASS 2023 State Agriculture Overview for Tennessee.

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On February 6, 2024, the U.S. District Court of Arizona ruled to vacate EPA's registration decision for OTT dicamba products, including Xtend®, finding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not provide proper notice-and-comment before registering these products. Given the proximity to the beginning of the 2024 planting season for cotton and soybeans and that most growers had already made input purchasing decisions, EPA granted an Existing Stocks Order for use of these products during the 2024 crop year.

Through a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and University of Tennessee Extension, dicamba users in Tennessee are well-equipped with the proper education, resources, and training to practice responsible stewardship when spraying dicamba products. The Tennessee Pesticide Safety and Education Program's Dicamba Stewardship Training serves to protect environmental and human health from improper use of dicamba products. Required by all dicamba users annually, this training equips applicators with the proper tools to prevent off-target movement of dicamba. In fact, according to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, dicamba-related complaints in Tennessee have decreased from 55 in 2018 to 5 in 2023, with no incidences reported so far in 2024. These intensive and comprehensive training programs reduce drift not just for dicamba products, but for all pesticides.

Looking forward, growers are already making cropping decisions for the 2025 crop year, and losing OTT low volatility dicamba products places them at risk. The absence of this low-volatility technology would remove a crucial component in a grower's weed control strategy, resulting in significant yield loss and economic harm. To ensure soybean and cotton producers have this label available in time for the next crop, TFBF urges swift approval of Bayer CropScience's proposed label registration for Xtend®.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Mayberry
President
Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation