



Pest Control Operator License: Current state of play

24 February 2026



Recap

- PCO Regulations of 2011 requires
 - PCO (Agriculture & Forestry) supervise the purchase & use restricted agricultural remedies on farm level
- Which remedies are restricted?
 - List compiled by Crop Life SA
 - Agri Intel database

Recap

- Final product formulation

	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Abalone 18 EC	L7458
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Abamec Plus	L5888
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Abamec X&M	L10933
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Adama Abamectin	L11053
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Agrimec Gold	L9235
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Agromectin (L6248)	L6248
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Agromectin (L6796)	L6796
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Biomectin 18 EC	L7979
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Farm-Ag Abamectin 18 EC	L10439
	Abamectin [syn. avermectin]	Unimectin 18EC	L7978

Recap

- Challenges
 - Timeline of implementation
 - Bottleneck in applications
 - Number of licenses per enterprise & admin fee = high cost to growers
 - Prior experience not recognized
 - Lack of PCOs to supervise applicants

Recap

- Efforts
 - Citrus Academy PCO short course
 - Liaison meetings with the Registrar's Office
 - Alternatives to restricted agricultural remedies
 - Proposals to amend the PCO regulations of 2011

High Court decision

- Crop Life SA communication (dated 29 January 2026)
 - Discrepancy between “restricted-use remedies” referred to in the PCO Regulations of 2011 & “restricted agricultural remedies” in the Regulations Relating to Agricultural Remedies promulgated in 2023.
- Growers may purchase and use restricted agricultural remedies without having a PCO license or being directly supervised by a Pest Control Operator.

What does this mean for growers?

- Currently, they don't need a PCO license to purchase/use restricted remedies.
- They are expected to **sign a declaration** prior to the purchase of any restricted agricultural remedy (see **Cutting Edge No. 433**).
- All other fields that required a PCO license prior to the court's decision, is unchanged (for example, aerial application of plant protection products).

Going forward

- These products are still high hazardous.
- What the PCO regulations tried to achieve is good agricultural practice we should meet (GLOBALG.A.P. IFA audits).
- Proper training will likely remain a prerequisite to use the remedies.
- No PCO application submitted or short course training completed is in vain.
- South Africa will still phase out the HHPs by 2035 – it's best to prepare accordingly and adjust to using alternatives (see **Cutting Edge No. 427**).

Going forward

- Collective effort to use these remedies:
- Lawfully
- Responsibly
- Good Agricultural Practice



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