

THYME-BASED PRODUCT DISINFECTS

Thymox kills bacteria, virus and fungi

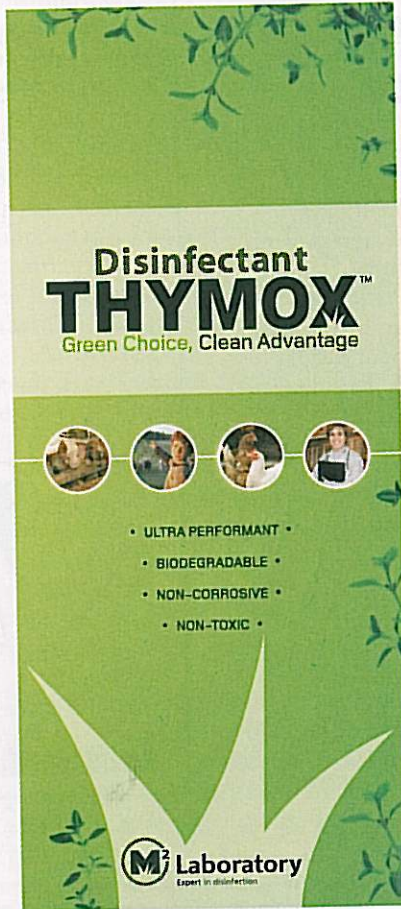
Listings of Canada's agricultural products rarely contain thyme. We may love it on chicken and in the herb garden, but it has never been a high-value product. The federal government hopes that by investing \$487,494 they can change thyme's image and make it an annual \$3.6 million farm product.

Laboratoire M2 is to receive \$350,000 as a repayable contribution to begin industrial production of Thymox, a farm disinfectant, and there are also funds for research. The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Agriculture, said, "This project will increase demand for our agricultural crops and help our farmers reach new and growing markets."

Advertisements for Thymox say "it is made of natural active ingredients that offer a wide spectrum of efficacy and is fully biodegradable. It is non-corrosive, non toxic, effective with hard water, doesn't stain and has a pleasant lemon-thyme aroma for several days."

Greg Walter, a poultry farmer with 51,000 birds, says he doesn't "like" the product: "I love it." He first saw Thymox at a farm show and had an interest in reducing the chemicals he uses. However, it was the smell that closed the deal. "It smells so nice. It lasts two to three weeks, even after the birds are back in the barn. I am full steam to look after Mother Nature."

Thymox is marketed as a greener natural product but is not organic. The active ingredient is the essential oil from thyme and there is also lemon, says Steve White from UNC/JEFO Nutrition, who distributes Thymox. Thymox will not be certified organic as they also



use some synthetic molecules in the process. It is thought to be safe enough to use for hand washing but the product is not designed for that purpose.

Marketing is just in the infancy in Ontario and the west. The company hopes to have a diluted version for the household market in 2010.

Thymox contains a foaming agent that helps it stick to barn walls for the minimum ten minutes required for disinfecting. This allows the operator to "see" where it was applied, ensuring complete coverage.

The label currently says it kills bacteria, virus and fungi. Specifics include *Salmonella*, *cholerae suis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Strepto coccus suis*, *Influenza A*,

Porcine Respiratory and Reproductive Syndrome (PRRS), Pathogenic fungus, and *Trichophyton mentagrophyte*. Compared to other common farm disinfectants, including Glutaraldehyde and quaternary ammonium based- and peroxygenated compounds, the company claims higher efficacy rates at one per cent dilution.

Another ongoing study is the safety of disinfecting while the animals are in the barn. At this time the primary market is for poultry with cleansing done between lots. However, tests to date show no skin irritation and no behavioural change when livestock are present, but this is yet to be finalized. With the needs of pork producers and rudiments in mind, they are anxious to prove it is safe for their standard procedures.

The thyme currently used comes from Switzerland and is called thyme Varico 3 (<http://www.mediseeds.ch/catalogue-commandes/thym-vulgaire-varico-3/>). It doesn't require much water, is cold resistant, and grows easily on the side of a mountain. There is a possibility the plants could be adapted for the Canadian climate by next year.

~Pat Kerr