China signals robust herbicide innovation with 174 registration applications

23 July 2026 | News

Latest ICAMA registration proposals reveal growing competition in herbicide formulations, rising interest in key active ingredients and continued investment from domestic manufacturers

China's herbicide industry is entering another phase of intense product development, with regulators proposing 174 herbicide products for registration in the fourth approval batch of 2026, highlighting sustained investment in crop protection technologies despite an increasingly competitive and tightly regulated market.

The latest list, released by the Institute for the Control of Agrochemicals, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (ICAMA), comprises 14 technical-grade products and 160 formulated herbicides. Of the formulations, 72 are single-active products, while 88 combine multiple active ingredients, reinforcing an industry-wide preference for combination chemistries that offer broader weed control and resistance management.

The proposed registrations also provide an early snapshot of where China's herbicide market is heading. Atrazine emerged as the most active ingredient in mixture formulations with 13 proposed registrations, reflecting its continued importance in integrated weed-management programmes. Propanil followed closely with 11 mixture applications, while Topramezone accounted for 10 mixture products and one single formulation. Meanwhile, Glufosinate-P continued to gain momentum, appearing in 10 standalone products and two mixtures, underscoring growing commercial interest in next-generation non-selective herbicides. Bentazone and Butachlor also featured prominently across multiple applications.

Beyond chemistry trends, the registration data points to intensifying competition among Chinese manufacturers. Liaoning Jintian Technology Co., Ltd. led the latest approval pipeline with seven proposed herbicide registrations, while several other companies secured between three and five proposed products, indicating a broadening field of competitors seeking to strengthen their market presence.

Although proposed registrations do not guarantee commercial approval, industry analysts often regard them as one of the earliest indicators of future product launches, manufacturing priorities and competitive positioning. Companies increasingly use registration strategies not only to expand product portfolios but also to anticipate shifts in agronomic demand, weed resistance and evolving regulatory requirements.

The dominance of formulated products over technical materials also reflects a broader industry transition toward differentiated, value-added crop protection solutions. As farmers seek more effective weed management while reducing application costs, manufacturers are investing heavily in combination formulations designed to improve efficacy, expand crop compatibility and address resistant weed populations.

The surge in registration activity comes as China's pesticide sector adapts to a significantly more stringent regulatory environment. New registration rules, tighter environmental assessment requirements and enhanced product traceability standards have raised compliance thresholds, making regulatory approval an increasingly strategic component of commercial growth.

Taken together, the latest registration proposals suggest that China's herbicide market remains highly dynamic, with innovation increasingly centred on formulation technologies, established active ingredients and competitive portfolio expansion.