

Planning for weed-free fields

When the goal is clean fields, it's important to have a plan in place to reach that goal. With a weed management plan, farmers can adapt more easily to unexpected challenges with product availability, weather or equipment. "It's better to have a plan than a goal," says Kevin Johnson, Field Scientist, Corteva Agriscience. "The goal will always be to have weed-free fields, but how are farmers planning to reach that goal?"

Here are four weed management strategies that farmers can implement to improve the effectiveness of their herbicide program:

1 Control weeds early. "The easiest weed to control is the weed that never emerges," Johnson says. "After that, the smaller the better." Start with an effective preemergence residual herbicide like Kyber® herbicide and plan to use a layered residual like EverpreX® herbicide in each postemergence pass.

2 Scout fields frequently. "Frequent scouting is key to timing postemergence applications to catch 2- to 4-inch weeds instead of fighting 6- to 8-inch weeds, which are much harder to kill," Johnson says it's better to apply layered residual postemergence herbicides early. "Even if no weeds have emerged—and a farmer is using a program that relies on layered residuals—an application can still be made," he says.

3 Use multiple, effective modes of action. When it comes to selecting herbicides to include in each pass, it's important to think about how many effective modes of action are in a farmer's program. "If there is glyphosate-resistant waterhemp, and only Roundup and Enlist herbicides are included in the program, then 100% of the pressure is put on Enlist herbicides to take care of the waterhemp," Johnson says. "However, by adjusting the mix to Enlist and Liberty herbicides, then there are two effective modes of action working against that weed." Liberty® herbicide is the primary tank-mix recommendation with Enlist One® herbicide for acres with high pressure of glyphosate-resistant broadleaf weeds, especially Palmer amaranth, waterhemp and kochia.

4 Think long term. Keeping weeds from going to seed and proactively mitigating the spread of resistance is the best defense for long-term weed management. "Don't try to save a penny today on weed control, because it will cost a dollar next season," Johnson says.

In addition to selecting powerful herbicides each season, the following factors can influence the success of a weed management program:

- Tillage
- Seeding density
- Herbicide application timing
- Harvest (avoid running a combine through areas with heavy weed infestations)
- Fertility programs
- Crop rotations (this allows for modes of action to be rotated as well)
- Cover crops

Measuring success in weed management

With several factors that contribute to the efficacy of herbicide programs each year, it can be challenging to evaluate how well a program performed compared with previous years. "A farmer may have dialed in the perfect herbicide program for a field, but unpredictable weather conditions prevented exceptional results," Johnson says. That's why he likes to refer to the quote "Are you better today than you were yesterday?"—or, in this case, are the weed control measures better today than they were yesterday?

Frequently evaluating a weed control program and looking for ways to improve the efficacy is imperative to an operation's success. Work closely with your Corteva Agriscience representative as they can use their experience to help determine which herbicide programs and practices will provide improved weed control on your customer's acres.



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