



October 18, 2013

## MANAGING WEEDS STARTS THIS FALL

For those that are doing on-farm research with cover crops, this has been an exceptional year with the fall rain and mild temperatures. But another cover crop is not so desirable or winter annual weeds. These weeds are emerging and actively growing in row crops in our area this year. Scouting during harvest can give no-till producers a head start on weed control for next year.

I have written a lot about certain weeds becoming more tolerant of roundup or even resistant. At the same time the reduced use of soil residual herbicides has set the stage in corn and soybean fields for glyphosate resistance such as marestail.

Weeds like henbit (turns purple in early spring when flowering) can not only compete for nutrients and moisture with an emerging crop next spring but it can also be an alternative host for soybean cyst nematode (SCN), a major soybean pathogen. So those early fields of purple in the spring we are seeing can be a bad thing when spraying them late.

According to Lowell Sandell at UNL, recent research on emergence timing of winter annual weeds across Nebraska showed that downy brome, tansy mustard, henbit, Carolina foxtail, and field pansy emerged mostly in the fall (more than 90% of total emergence). Virginia pepperweed and purslane speedwell had the majority of the seedlings emerging in the fall (approximately 70% of total emergence), but some seedlings also emerged during late winter and early spring. Shepherdspurse and field pennycress had some seedlings emerging during fall (approximately 30% of total emergence), but the majority of it occurred in late winter and early spring.

Henbit and marestail seem to be the most prevalent or troublesome winter annual weeds in our area. As these species are expected to emerge mostly in the fall, scouting and managing these fields right after crop harvest is a reasonable strategy. Numerous herbicide tank-mix options are available for control of most winter annual weeds. An organic method of weed control, producers that seed cover crops are reporting not as much problem with the emergence of these weeds.

Nebraska research on these two weeds has shown the majority of fall emergence was completed by early November, thus, targeting herbicide applications from late October to mid-November would be the strategy on non-cover crop fields. Waiting until late spring can result in reduced control.

If glyphosate-resistant marestail is one of the primary targets of control, the use or inclusion of a growth regulator herbicide (2,4-D and/or dicamba) is necessary for adequate control. Lowell indicates this year was a relatively light year for marestail, in part due to extreme drought conditions during the fall of 2012. With the rain this fall, marestail is germinating and could become more of a problem in 2014 if timely management is ignored. If different products than 2,4-D are being used, make sure and check the grazing restrictions on the label if the fields will be pastured.



Consult pages 59 (corn) and 103 (soybeans) of the 2013 Guide for Weed Management in Nebraska (EC130) for effective options for your winter annual weed spectrum and fall control guidelines.

Randy Pryor, Extension Educator  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Saline County  
306 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Wilber, NE 68465  
Phone (402) 821-2151 • Fax (402) 821-3398 • e-mail: [randy.pryor@unl.edu](mailto:randy.pryor@unl.edu)