

Special care for fallow fields

CHICAGO, Ill. — Use of atrazine in the Great Plains has caused some "unusual shifts in weed population" according to a Kansas researcher.

These shifts may require adjustments in chemical control to see that fallow fields stay void of weeds throughout the growing season, particularly when it comes to kochia, a weed known as a real 'moisture-robbler'.

"Only the toughest broadleaf weeds and any grasses give us real trouble," says Phil Stahlman, Weed Control Research Agronomist at the Ft. Hays Experiment Station. "Widespread use of atrazine takes care of some of the lesser broadleaves."

But, Stahlman says, the weeds that remain — kochia primary among them — almost always require a tank-mix for effective control.

"This is where the tank-mix fits nicely," he says. "We've got some weeds that are tolerant to 2, 4-D as well, but if you add Banvel herbicide for instance, it will clean them right up."

Stahlman explains that kochia is a tough weed to control with 2, 4-D once it gets up in size.

"Where the tank-mix helps us is if we go above the seedling stage. If it's larger than four inches, we need the extra punch to nail it."

Gene Heikes, Professor of Weed Science at Colorado State, lists kochia as one of the big problems that comes up after harvest has opened the field.

"Especially if you get a lot of rain, you get a lot of broadleaf pressure, particularly kochia, Russian thistle, and pigweed," he says. "But the grasses and volunteer wheat don't come in until later."

Dr. Bob Sparnicht, Product Development Representative for Velsicol, says "Control of kochia and Russian thistle in chemical fallow — that's definitely the niche Banvel herbicide fills in a tank-mix. You can tank-mix with Roundup and take out the grasses and the broadleaves as well, without any danger of a residual that might affect next year's alternate cropping sequence."

Sparnicht explains that Banvel is likely to be a cost-effective addition to almost any application of 2, 4-D or Roundup.

"Farmers may as well add four ounces of Banvel herbicide to control the kochia and Russian thistle when they apply 2, 4-D," he says. "It's a treatment that they'll be a lot happier with."

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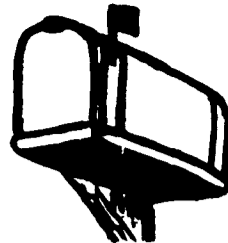
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