Post Program Is Flexible With Corn Growers

WILMINGTON, Del. — Corn growers can use a postemergence herbicide to control grass weeds such as foxtail, woolly cupgrass, and wild proso millet up to four weeks after emergence without significant yield loss.

Although yield losses generally increase with weed density and duration of competition, corn may tolerate a few early weeds for a period of time without significant vield loss, said Ellery Knake, University of Illinois extension weed scientist. In addition, weeds germinating three weeks or more after the corn was planted resulted in negligible yield reductions.

"Our research has shown that you can let foxtail grow with corn for three to four weeks. If you have a good selective postemergence herbicide that will control the foxtail, you probably suffer very little, if any yield loss," Knake said.

Other land grant university competition studies with corn and some other grass weeds — including johnsongrass, shattercane and quackgrass - have resulted in similar findings.

In the three-year Illinois study, giant foxtail was removed from corn at various time intervals. Results showed that foxtail did not significantly lower yields until it grew to between six and nine inches tall.

When removed at three inches, the foxtail reduced corn yields less than one percent; at six inches, the plots showed less than a two percent yield decrease. Knake said that allowing grasses to grow until an early postemergence herbicide application should not result in significant yield loss.

Application flexibility and control of foxtail in test plots are reasons why weed scientists anticipate a greater reliance by farmers on new sulfonylurea post-emergence herbicides. Du Pont "Accent," registered in June 1990, is a significant breakthrough with proven capability to control a broad spectrum of grassy weeds,

Knake said.

"Being effective and quite selective, 'Accent' can help fill one of the last parts of the weed control puzzle — good post-emergence control of grass weeds in corn," Knake said.

University of Illinois researchers also studied the effect of foxtail that started growing at various times during the season. The main problem is with foxtail that begins growing the same time as the crop, once corn has a head start, it has the competitive advantage, Knake said. Foxtail that started growing several weeks after the corn didn't make much growth.

"This is especially true with the high plant populations and narrow rows used by farmers today,' Knake said. "If you let foxtail grow a few weeks and then kill it with a good postemergence herbicide, you'll probably not have to worry much about later foxtail making enough growth to affect yields.'

Growers should strive for

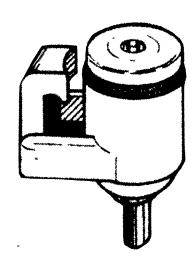
season-long control, however,

the season could produce some seed for future years, Knake said.



When removed at three-inch heights, foxtall reduced corn yields by less than one percent, according to a University of illinois study.

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