

Agronomy Day 2011 Is Fast Approaching

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We would like to remind everyone that Agronomy Day 2011 will be held on Thursday, August 18, at the Crop Sciences Research and Education Center (South Farms), beginning at 7:00 a.m. Speakers on four field tours will cover a multitude of

topics, including challenging insects, diseases, and weeds; soil testing, fertility, and tillage for corn production; advances in crop improvement through traditional and contemporary breeding methods; biofuels; and more. Numerous tent displays will offer ample opportunities to engage in informal discussions, adding a dimension to our continuing efforts to transfer the latest research-based information to constituents.

Agronomy Day will also include new features this year. Interested individuals can participate in guided tours of the University of Illinois Arboretum. The University of Illinois Plant Clinic will offer free on-site diagnosis of plant samples (sorry, no soil), and the Sustainable Student Farm will sell locally grown garden produce under the tent beginning at 9:00 a.m. Much more detail about Agronomy Day 2011, including the organizations providing financial support, is available at the Agronomy Day web site.

Three weed science faculty members from the Department of Crop Sciences will participate in field tour stops. Dr. Dean Riechers will share a tour stop with Dr. Scott Bretthauer, extension specialist from the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, to discuss the use of

auxinic herbicides for weed control in agronomic crops and recent advances in application technologies that reduce the potential for off-target movement while maintaining good coverage of the target vegetation. The continual evolution of waterhemp biotypes resistant to one or more herbicide families and the forthcoming commercialization of soybean varieties resistant to dicamba or 2,4-D suggests that use of auxinic herbicides will increase. Stop by to learn more about how application parameters and technology can help keep auxinic herbicides on target.

The second weed science tour stop will feature a discussion of a "new" pigweed species that might soon appear on farmers' radar screens. Dr. Patrick Tranel and I will introduce Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*). This pigweed species, which has been described as "waterhemp's big brother," can actually grow faster and larger and be more competitive with agronomic crops than waterhemp! And it can be found in Illinois corn and soybean fields. Add in the fact that a glyphosate-resistant Palmer amaranth population has been confirmed in Illinois, and you have the ingredients for a lively discussion. We'll share techniques to distinguish Palmer amaranth from waterhemp and other pigweed species, provide background on its biology and ecology, and suggest how to manage it in Illinois agronomic crops.

On behalf of all weed science faculty and staff at the University of Illinois and the USDA/ARS, we look forward to visiting with you on August 18 at Agronomy Day. Δ

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