

Dry Weather Impacts Weed Control In Wheat

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Dry conditions throughout much of the region have impacted weed management decisions for wheat this season. The small amounts of sporadic rains seemed to stimulate emergence of volunteer corn soon after corn harvest. Some growers elected to spray or till to control volunteer corn while others did nothing. Those who chose not to control volunteer corn probably made the right decision since corn in many cases died due to lack of soil moisture.

Cool-season weeds such as chickweed, henbit, and Italian ryegrass have not emerged in large numbers compared with volunteer corn. Although I normally recommend a burndown treatment for no-till wheat, this is one situation where I might consider other alternatives for managing cool-season weeds for wheat that is already planted. Emerged weeds will be drought stressed and difficult to control with a burndown herbicide treatment. Henbit and purple deadnettle are especially difficult to control during dry conditions. Rain will eventually occur; and when it does it may be wise to check fields two to three weeks after rainfall to determine if a fall post treatment is warranted. The good news is there are several herbicide options that can be applied after wheat emergence to con-

trol broadleaf and grassy weeds in wheat.

No-till growers who chose to delay planting wheat will have time to evaluate the need for a burndown treatment. Although paraquat may do a slightly better job in controlling drought stressed weeds than glyphosate, there are some species such as henbit and purple deadnettle that may not be controlled regardless of which burndown herbicide is applied. If glyphosate is used as the burndown treatment, the use of ammonium sulfate as an additive may help improve control of both broadleaf and grassy weeds.

The delay of emergence of Italian ryegrass will likely push back the time to spray for this weed. Under normal conditions, the preferred time to treat ryegrass with a postemergence herbicide is in the Fall about 4 weeks after planting. Based on current circumstances, it may be mid to late December before ryegrass populations have emerged enough to justify spraying. Growers will have difficulty finding a period during that time of year when weather conditions are favorable to spray. If growers wait until spring to spray ryegrass, they need to be aware of the risk of crop injury when applying such herbicides as Osprey or PowerFlex near the time of topdressing nitrogen fertilizer. Δ

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