

# Early-Season Weed Control Is The Foundation Of A Successful Crop

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**W**ith all the news around herbicide resistance and the elaborate ways to combat it, we may have lost sight on good, old-fashioned weed control programs. Fortunately for rice, herbicide resistance pales in magnitude and scale

to row crops in the South, but should weigh heavily on your weed control decisions this spring. Hopefully we've all learned what can happen if we rely too heavily on one herbicide mode of action for too long. It may be that some of the oldest, most proven herbicides provide the best weed control on your farm. Now is a good time to consider those 'old' herbicides in your crop plan to mix up the chemistry and keep the weeds guessing.

Thiobencarb is a chemical I grew up with on our rice farm. It was the foundation of all of our weed control programs for years. After Command came along, thiobencarb got pushed out of the way, but now it's making a comeback, of sorts. Thiobencarb, better known as Bolero, or also an active ingredient in RiceBeaux, is a tried and true pre-emergence rice herbicide. To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any weed resistance issues with thiobencarb and it offers a mode of action unique to the rice world. Thiobencarb can be used as a standalone delayed pre-emergence chemical, but I've always seen the best results when it's included in a tank mix with propanil, Facet, or other postemergence herbicides.

Speaking of propanil, there is another rice herbicide that has been somewhat forgotten over the last decade. Since the explosion of ALS-

inhibiting herbicides, propanil has been somewhat pushed to the back burner as well. Although there are several documented cases of propanil-resistant barnyardgrass, propanil is still a good herbicide and offers another unique mode of action. It's compatible with nearly all other rice herbicides and provides excellent control of small broadleaf weeds. In fact, thinking back to my former small-plot testing days, Command followed by propanil was about the best conventional herbicide program we evaluated year in, year out. On the CLEARFIELD side, propanil is an excellent addition to pick up those pesky broadleaf weeds that Newpath may miss, or only suppress. A few examples would be eclipta, jointvetch, and coffeebean. Propanil does a great job on all of these if sprayed when they are small.

When planning for your 2011 weed control programs, take notes as to what worked last year and the year before, and then do something slightly different. By no means am I suggesting abandoning what works, but rather suggesting you be mindful of the mixture of modes of action you're using and make sure you are constantly changing things up in order to keep the weeds on their toes. If you equate your annual weed control program to warfare, it may give you a little more perspective. For example, and to steal a quote from *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, consider this, "...if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or you may lose..." (Loosely interpreted, you never know when your old standby weed control program may come up snake eyes). △

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