

# From Disaster To Success

## Experience On Fogg Farm Shows Being Proactive Can Curb Pigweed Threat

Part 1 of 6

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**WIDENER, AR.**

It was the 1,000 acres of dryland that posed the Palmer pigweed problem last year for Sid Fogg of Widener, Ark. With limited rotational capabilities, soybean is the perfect crop for these fields.

"Where you plant corn, you can use Atrazine and that pretty much holds the pigweeds down, so on the irrigated ground we don't have a problem with pigweed," Fogg said. "It's just the dryland acres where we normally have beans and wheat. Roundup was perfect for that for 15 years."

Pigweed has been a common problem on this farm, but two years ago the weed showed up strongly despite spraying.

"I really thought that my spray rig operator had missed some spots, but it turned out that he didn't and they were just resistant and they came up," he added.

That was in 2008, so last year Fogg started using a preemerge on all the early crops. He harvested his wheat between June 1 and 10, and it's normally dry at that time.

"Last year in June we didn't put out a preemerge because the chances of getting rain to incorporate the preemerge in June are not very good," he explained. "However, last year it did rain, and a flush of pigweeds came up. We didn't have a preemerge and we really didn't know how bad it was until we just couldn't kill them. There were some fields that were so bad we could barely run a combine through. I mean, they were monster pigweeds and once they got 8 or 10 inches tall there wasn't any way to kill them."

All he could do was get the disk out, or just let them grow. He let them grow because the price of beans was \$9-\$10 and his goal was to harvest some kind of crop.

"I spent about \$50 an acre trying to kill those pigweeds last year and I didn't do a very good job of it," he said. "Then there was a 20 bushel difference in yield where we had the pigweeds compared to the parts of the fields that didn't have any. We have a monitor on the combine and that gives you an idea of what you're cutting. Instead of 40 bushels, we were cutting 20 where the pigweeds were thick and that's a lot of money to lose."

Fogg said people are hesitant to spend \$12-\$15 on a preemerge, then come back and spray early in the season and even spray again, because they may have \$30 an acre invested trying to kill pigweed.

"However, if you're not willing to spend that money and kill those pigweeds and they get away from you it's going to cost you a whole lot more than that," he added.

University of Arkansas Extension personnel, headed by Bob Scott, Ken Smith and Mitch Crow, set up the demonstration on the Fogg farm this year with 150 different plots where they sprayed different chemicals.

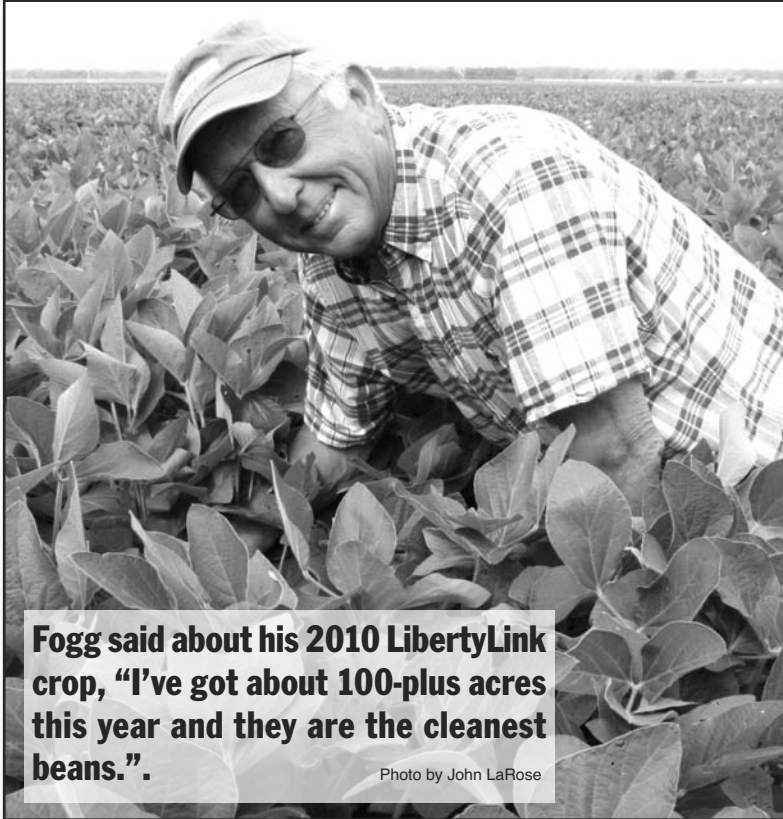
"One of the interesting things is we normally put out 22 ounces of Roundup," said Fogg. "They've got a spot where they put out all the way up to 176 ounces of Roundup which is eight times more, and it didn't kill any more than the 22 ounces. So once these weeds get resistant it doesn't matter how much you put on there it's not going to kill them."

Fogg plans to go back to soybeans again next year in these fields.

"If the price of soybeans and the price of the milo stays where it is and it's still to my advantage to plant soybeans, I will plant more LibertyLink soybeans next year," he proposed. "I've

got about 100-plus acres this year and they are the cleanest beans. I put out a preemerge, and I came back and sprayed Ignite when the pigweeds were small, and it really worked." He compared the pictures from last year with this year's LibertyLink field with the Ignite. "It really does work if you get it out at the right time."

This is his first year to try LibertyLink soy-



**Fogg said about his 2010 LibertyLink crop, "I've got about 100-plus acres this year and they are the cleanest beans."**

Photo by John LaRose

beans, but he finds they seem to be performing well. They have a lot of pods on them, they looked promising at the field day and they are clean.

"I think I probably will go to more acres next year," he added. "I have the card of the representative right here, and I'm interested in researching the different maturity groups and yields and so forth."

Last year's experience was a scary thing for him.

"We started spraying and it just didn't work, nothing worked."

Fogg agrees with the idea of early treatment. "You just have to put preemerge out and hope that you get a rain to get it incorporated," he said. "Even though we know pretty much what we should do, if you don't get the timely rains to incorporate your chemical or if you get a lot of rain and you can't get your chemical out, you have a problem. It goes both ways. So a lot of these fields, the timing was just perfect and it really worked."

Normally, Fogg's yields run 36 bushels.

"On the dryland we try to plant either wheat or early beans and so the early beans had a history of about 36 bushels the last three or four years," he said. "We've had a little bit better than that, but when you throw in the wheat bean yield, which is normally around 25, it brings it back down. So my overall average is in the mid 30s."

Fogg and his wife, Bess, farm over 3,500 acres, all but about 1,000 acres of which are irrigated. Some is rented ground. He came back to take over the farm in 1977 after military service.

"We're fortunate right here that we can farm about any crop we want to depending on the economics of that crop," he said. "We raised cotton for about 20 years, we quit raising cotton two years ago because I built some grain bins and I wanted to fill them to the max and make sure they pay for themselves. So once I get my bins paid for, I'll go back to cotton. This is a good cotton farm right here, and it has been since in the 1940s."

Rice, corn, wheat and grain sorghum round out their crops. Δ

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*Editor Note: Be sure to check next week's issue for Part 3 & 4.*



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