

Growing Season Starts With Challenges And Benefits

DR. JIM MARTIN

PRINCETON, KY.



The delay in corn planting has created bad news and good news when it comes to controlling weeds.

The wet conditions that caused delays in planting corn have reduced levels of soil-residual herbicides that were applied this past fall or early spring. Such weeds as giant ragweed and common lambsquarters are likely to escape control earlier than normal with early preplant treatments. These conditions may require that postemergence treatments need to be more timely to limit early weed competition. As a general rule the ideal time to control weeds in order to limit competition to corn is when weeds are about 2 to 4 inches in height.

The cloudy and wet conditions this spring tended to slow the burndown activity for some herbicide treatments. The price increase in glyphosate this season has tempted some growers to shave rates. It took longer to achieve the desired level of burndown control where atrazine was mixed with low rates of glyphosate. The delay in herbicide activity caused some con-

cern, yet patience usually paid off.

A possible benefit with later plantings is that growers may be more timely with applications for warm-season perennials vines including honeyvine milkweed. As general rule honeyvine milkweed grows slowly during the early part of the season. Delaying corn planting allows for more favorable conditions for growth of warm-season perennials. Plants can develop more foliage and have more weed biomass for herbicide uptake. This approach is especially beneficial for treating honeyvine milkweed since its growth habit does not lend itself to interception of sprays compared with plants that tend have an upright growth habit with several leaves.

Research has shown that application timing may affect control or suppression of honeyvine milkweed. The amount of honeyvine milkweed regrowth following application tended to be slightly less when Distinct was applied to plants having 8 leaves with an average height of 12 inches compared with those applied to plants having 4 leaves with an average height of 3 inches. By limiting the amount of honeyvine milkweed growth resulted in fewer corn plants being wrapped with vines near harvest time. Δ

Dr. Jim Martin is Extension Weed Scientist with the University of Kentucky at Princeton.