

Key Herbicide In Short Supply For Arkansas Cotton Growers

MONTICELLO, ARK.

Cotton growers are scrambling to find herbicides that can make or break their crop in the face of resistant pigweed, said Ken Smith, extension weed scientist for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

And some of them are getting frustrated.

"I'm hearing the rumblings," Gus Wilson, Chicot County extension staff chair said Friday. "I had a call from a cotton grower just this morning."

Cotoran, Direx, and Caparol are in short supply after a winter of promoting the practice of using a pre-emerge herbicide to prevent pigweed germination. The method also calls for a second application about three weeks later to ensure the pigweed doesn't come up with the cotton.

"We're glad cotton growers were receptive to our message," Smith said. "But sometimes, success can backfire and the herbicide makers say they're surprised by the demand and hadn't anticipated it."

"I have been told that all inventories are currently in dealer warehouses and when this is exhausted, there will be no additional product until June," Smith said.

Weed scientists say the pre-emerge applications are critical in areas where resistant pigweed is present.

"I had three people call me last week who got busy planting and did not get the herbicide out and the weeds came up with the cotton," he said. "They probably spent \$100 per acre, and my only sug-

gestion for them was to plow it up and start over.

"That's how critical it is to have a residual herbicide," Smith said. "They will lose the crop."

Growers should order product as soon as possi-

Pigweed has developed into a difficult foe for Arkansas farmers.

U of A Division of Agriculture photo illustration by Mary Hightower



ble and take delivery as soon as possible.

"If no pre-emergence herbicide is available, then switch to Liberty Link cotton and use Ignite and Dual as soon as the cotton emerges," he said. "If Liberty Link cotton is not an option, plant soybeans."

For the week ending May 9, the cotton crop was 56 percent planted and 25 percent emerged, running well ahead of last year and the five-year average, according to the National Agricultural Statistic Service. Δ