

MU Crop Management Conference, Dec. 1-2 Promises Strong Lineup Of Experts

COLUMBIA, MO.

This year's University of Missouri Crop Management Conference, Dec. 1-2 in Columbia, will bring together more than a dozen experts to talk about pressing issues for farmers.

It's fair to say that speakers won't shy away from contentious subjects.

"We definitely are addressing some hot-topic issues this year in ways that we hope will lead to a lively discussion," said Kevin Bradley, the MU weed scientist who spearheaded the planning for this year's conference.

Kicking off the two-day event will be a keynote address by Paul Esker, a University of Wisconsin plant pathologist, who will speak about foliar fungicide applications for yield enhancement in field crops.

"It can be a controversial issue because when you apply fungicides for yield enhancement, you're not really considering it primarily as a disease management decision," Bradley said. Esker will discuss data from many states to give a broad view of the utility of fungicides in field crops throughout the Midwest.

Conference sessions will update farmers on disease, insect and weed problems. There also will be a session about glyphosate and its impact on other factors in crop production. Robert Kremer, a USDA Agricultural Research Service scientist based at MU, will tackle the chemical's impact on soil microbes.

"Dr. Kremer heads an effort among many scientists to consider all the other potential interactions glyphosate might have in the agro-ecosystem, and that's getting a lot more attention lately," Bradley said. "He focuses on how glyphosate interacts with soil microbial populations especially, which could certainly be an issue with the continuous use of glyphosate

that is occurring in some of our production fields in Missouri."

On the second day speakers will discuss issues surrounding water pH and poly tanks, and how farmers need to heed precautions to make herbicide and pesticide use effective and safe.

"Poly tanks, water pH and water hardness are all factors that should be carefully considered in pesticide application," Bradley said. "There are a lot of safety interactions and performance issues that can be avoided when applicators pay attention to these factors."

Bradley will wrap up the conference with his own talk on herbicide resistance in weeds. He is currently working with a group of weed scientists across the U.S. to produce a USDA white paper on best management practices to reduce herbicide resistance. The findings from this effort will be the focus of his talk.

"We're writing about the reasons why a farmer won't do what we recommend when it comes to herbicide-resistant weeds, which gets into some socioeconomic factors, your personality, whether you're risk averse or not, and other factors like that," Bradley said. "I think it is an interesting way to look at it and it has certainly helped me to understand a little more about why farmers make the decisions they make."

The conference begins at 8 a.m. on Dec. 1. Cost is \$160 for the full conference or \$105 for one day. Registrations must be postmarked by Nov. 24 to avoid a \$25 late fee.

The conference will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn near the Bass Pro Shop in Columbia, a change from the event's traditional venue.

A full schedule and registration form are available at www.plantsci.missouri.edu/cmc. For room reservations, call the Hilton Garden Inn at 573-814-5464. △



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