

Plan Ahead For Palmer

Farmers Who Monitor, Make Timely Applications Can Curb Palmer Amaranth In Soybeans

BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

MARIANNA, ARK.

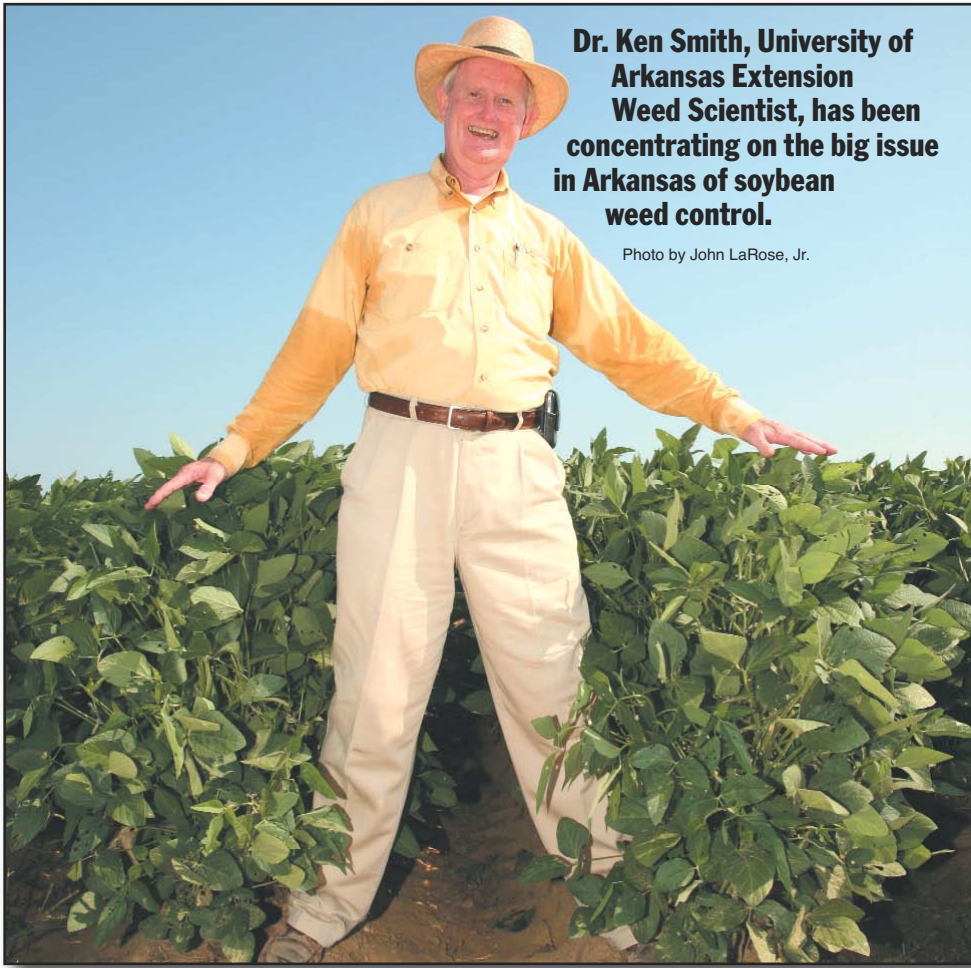
Soybean weed control is a big issue in Arkansas as the crop now is grown in about 3.5 million acres. Dr. Ken Smith, University of Arkansas Extension weed scientist, has been concentrating much of his time on the problem.

“Those 3.5 million acres aren’t much compared to the midwest but for the mid south that’s a sizeable acreage for us and it does require that we spend considerable time manag-

“By doing that, we’ve been able to get to canopy closure very clean and those programs work very well for us,” he added. “If we do have a little break in our preemerges before we can get back in there we’ll go back in with Flexstar at a pint rate and take out those small ones and I’m talking small ones being two inches or less.”

The critical part of soybean weed control is monitoring and making sure applications are on time. If there’s bad weather than that steps up the criticalness of monitoring and it crunches everything together on timing.

Smith called a farmer last year and asked how



Dr. Ken Smith, University of Arkansas Extension Weed Scientist, has been concentrating on the big issue in Arkansas of soybean weed control.

Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

ing weeds,” he said. “We have some of the same issues in soybean we do in other crops and recently that’s been glyphosate resistant Palmer amaranth. That’s the one that’s causing us the most grief and I get many calls about it.

“Fortunately though, we do have some tools in soybeans that we can use to manage this weed a little bit more effectively maybe than in cotton,” Smith continued. “It may be a little easier to manage in soybeans than it is in cotton and what we’ve encouraged our farmers to do is go to some narrow rows, like 30-inch rows; or if we’re on 38-inch beds plant twin rows. That puts us effectively on a 30-inch row.”

It’s helpful even to go to 19-inch or 15-inch rows or even drill beans; that quick canopy helps in that late season weed control. However, there are issues possible with drilled beans. Uniformity of the stand is absolutely critical, so it’s important to do a good job of drilling them.

“We can’t just take them out there and scatter them out, that’s not quite drilling soybeans,” he said. “We have to start with a preemerge herbicide. We just feel like any program that we have must have a preemerge herbicide. We’ve looked at these for two or three years now, and fortunately, if you put these in a program approach, it really doesn’t make much difference which pre emerge herbicide it is. The ones that we recommend and our farmers have had great success with in our state have been Valor or Envive, Prefix has been a real workhorse for us, also Authority MTZ. There are several of those that have done a really good job for us as a pre-emerge when we came back and put them into a program.”

By a program Smith doesn’t mean put out a preemerge and come back and spray with Roundup, Roundup, Roundup. It means come back with something like a Flexstar GT, something that has another residual herbicide. Something that has Dual in it, such as Roundup plus Dual before that first herbicide break.

the crop was. He said ‘Right now we’re in good shape. So far we haven’t missed an application timing. We’ve been on time with everything.’ Smith was amazed, especially since the weather patterns in that area of the state were challenging. Mother Nature hadn’t been kind to farmers. He admitted “You’re right, we have really humped it, we’ve really busted it, but we haven’t missed an application.”

“With that attitude and that commitment, with that recognition of how serious this timing issue is we can do a pretty good job in soybeans,” Smith said.

Smith expects farmers will use a lot of the Liberty Link technology in Arkansas next year.

“It won’t be a large percentage because we just simply don’t have enough seed, even if we wanted to switch to that large a percentage. But we will have a sizeable acreage of LibertyLink technology in our soybeans. And that technology has worked really, really well,” he said.

“Still, we must not move away from our pre-emerge herbicides. Use a pre, come back with Ignite plus Dual, and we’re clean, we’re clean. So that program works pretty well for us in soybean and it’s one that a lot of our farmers are going to use.

“Some may be a little reluctant to do that because they haven’t seen the varieties; but we had the varieties in our variety test for the last two or three years, and they perform very well. Our farmers that have them this year are very pleased with them so I think that technology is going to be well accepted next year.”

Smith urges farmers to be conscious of the Palmer amaranth problem before the season begins.

“If we vow to manage this before the season begins and we have a plan we’ll succeed,” he said. “Again, it doesn’t matter which herbicides we use as much as it does that we’re there on time.”

BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER: Senior Staff Writer, MidAmerica Farmer Grower



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