

U.S. Edamame Production Takes A Step Forward

URBANA, ILL.

Edamame production just took a step forward, said Marty Williams, a weed scientist with USDA-ARS and the University of Illinois. Dual Magnum, an important herbicide, has recently been registered for use on edamame, or vegetable soybean.

“As I understand, this is one of the first herbicides receiving a federal label for use on edamame,” Williams said. “Edamame producers now have an additional, important tool to help suppress weeds that would otherwise severely limit crop yield.”

Edamame production in the United States has been in an infant stage for decades, Williams

with the IR-4 Project, a major resource located at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The IR-4 Project supplies pest management tools for specialty crop growers by developing research data to support new EPA tolerances and labeled product uses. Williams is focused on identifying the regulatory status of specific herbicides and submitting clearance requests as needed for products that can benefit growers.

His team plans to continue to conduct research that is needed to “put the pieces together” and bridge the gap between the vegetable industry, herbicide manufacturers and federal programs.



Edamame differs from the standard soybean because edamame cultivars are selected for certain eating traits and the crop is harvested while the seed is in an immature stage. It's a very healthy food, and one of the more nutritious snack foods available.

Photo by
Theresa Herman,
University of Illinois

said. Federal registration of a key herbicide such as S-metolachlor (Dual Magnum) reduces one of several constraints to growth of this industry.

“Although soybean dominates the Midwest agricultural landscape, nearly all of the edamame we consume is imported from Asia,” Williams said. “One of the reasons why this occurs is because there have been few pesticides registered for use on edamame, limiting domestic, commercial production.”

While labeling a single herbicide doesn't solve all the problems associated with producing this crop in the United States, Williams believes it begins to remove some of the primary obstacles, namely weed interference, which is a problem in every field every year.

Williams and his team of researchers are focused on improving weed management in vegetable cropping systems, particularly in the Midwest. His involvement with edamame has included working with vegetable growers, processing companies, and university researchers to identify potential solutions to production constraints.

Part of Williams' job has included working

Williams said a number of other products that could be very useful to growers are in the registration pipeline.

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Edamame's increasing popularity and importance as a crop for U.S. growers and processors has become increasingly evident to the IR-4 Project's associate director Dan Kunkel.

“I have received a large number of calls requesting pest control products for this commodity over the past year, probably more than I have received for any other commodity in the past 20 years,” Kunkel said. “Fortunately, data from other legume crops can be used to support registrations on edamame and therefore, a number of new uses have been added to product labels recently, or should be available soon to address grower needs.”

Kunkel reminds growers that edamame is listed on labels as Soybean, Immature Seed. Δ



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