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Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION

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February 15, 2025

Spring is approaching and one of the first activities to begin will be early herbicide applications to kill out cover crops and fields with weed challenges such as annual ryegrass and marehail. UK Extension Weed specialist Dr. Travis Legleiter prepared the following article regarding specific recommendations for two of our more problematic winter annuals in Kentucky.

Italian (annual) ryegrass is a well-known pest in Kentucky wheat, but the number of failed burndowns in corn and soybean has been increasing. The key to successful annual ryegrass burndown is all about timing. Successful annual ryegrass burndowns occur in the window when the following three conditions are happening at the same time, grass height of six inches or less, overnight temperatures above 45 degrees 2-3 days before and after herbicide treatment, and field conditions dry enough for sprayer travel.

In evaluations of spring burndown options for ryegrass control in Kentucky, the following keys stand out. Use at least 1.5lb ae/a glyphosate, mixtures of 1.5 lb ae/a glyphosate plus 1 fl oz Sharpen results in the consistently greatest ryegrass control, and avoid tank mixing glyphosate and atrazine or metribuzin as these products will antagonize glyphosate activity in ryegrass.

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For those dealing with ryegrass in corn, the temptation is to put the burndown and preemergence herbicide on at the same time prior to corn planting. While that has proven to be successful for the majority of acres and weed species, the inclusion of a pre-emerge herbicide that likely contains atrazine can antagonize the glyphosate. In these scenarios, a farmer is better suited to apply their burndown without atrazine early in the spring and follow with an at-planting application of the atrazine-based residual herbicide.

Another culprit that continues to be problematic for Kentucky grain crop growers is marestalk. Marestalk is most troublesome due to its seemingly random emergence patterns. It can emerge in the fall, early spring, late spring, and throughout the early summer months. While the majority of our marestalk emerges in the fall or the early spring, the continual emergence into the summer makes this species especially troublesome for soybean farmers.

The biggest key for marestalk management is burndown timing, regardless of what herbicide you are using for your burndown. It is always critical that applications are made to small rosette stage marestalk to assure efficacy of that application. The wide range of emergence timing for marestalk means every field is likely to have different stages of marestalk. Scouting fields now and into early March will be key to identifying fields with fall emerged marestalk that need earlier burndowns to achieve optimal marestalk control.

An alternative for fields with low winter annual grass pressure and high broadleaf and marestalk pressure is Gramoxone. A mixture of Gramoxone plus metribuzin plus dicamba or 2,4-D has been shown to be effective on marestalk. Gramoxone also has the additional benefit of controlling small winter annual grasses. Enlist and XtendFlex soybean varieties have greatly

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increased the flexibility of 2,4-D and Dicamba for burndown applications in front of soybean planting for effective marestail control. Farmers using either of these soybean systems in fields with marestail are encouraged to take advantage of this flexibility and use these effective growth regulators for spring burndowns.

In addition to a successful burndown, allowing no-till planting into clean weed competition free fields, we strongly encourage the use of no less than two modes of action of products labeled for soil residual control in soybeans. We would never plant corn into a field lacking soil residual herbicide yet there are still a lot of soybean acres planted without residual weed control protection. The easiest weed to kill in a soybean field is a weed that never had the chance to emerge. Include a ppo inhibitor and metribuzin in your preplant herbicide strategy for soybeans and include a group 15 labeled for post emergence application in soybean. These effective soil residual chemistries are essential to the ongoing development of herbicide resistant waterhemp and palmer amaranth. A useful guide for determining the ideal pre-emergence herbicides for palmer and waterhemp control in your soybeans is available on my website at <https://daviess.ca.uky.edu/anr>.

Farm City Breakfast

The Annual Farm City Breakfast will be next Saturday, February 22 at 7:30 am at Daviess County High School.

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