Renwood Farms November, 2016

Wheat Weed Control

Ryegrass and winter weeds competing in wheat fields lower yields and profits. Ryegrass control in wheat is compounded by an evolving species that is germinating over a five month window. A second ryegrass problem is chemical resistance to the different materials used to control.

In the photo, ryegrass is pictured at three different growth stages in the same field on February 1st. This should alert growers who plan to spray one time in the fall for ryegrass that field scouting is still needed to make sure a second (or third) flush does not occurred.

Ryegrass Strategies

Burndown: Regardless of tillage, weed control starts with fields that are clean of all weeds at planting. Paraquat (Gramoxone, Parazone) and 2,4-D or Roundup and 2,4-D are excellent burndown materials.

Clethodim (Arrow, Select, etc.) is an older grass control material that controls large Roundup Ready volunteer corn and provides excellent control of any emerged ryegrass. There is a one-week planting interval after application. It is relatively inexpensive material and offers a rotational option.

Pre-emergence: Valor SX can be applied seven days prior to wheat planting for *notill wheat*. With conventional tillage, the label still requires a 30-day window prior to planting plus 1" of rain. No tillage can occur after application. Caution: seed must be planted at least 1" deep to avoid serious crop injury.

Early Post-Emergence: ***This program has worked best for most growers.*** There are two options for an early post-emergence application for ryegrass and bluegrass pre-emergence control: Zidua® and Prowl H2O®.

Both can be applied *only after wheat has fully emerged*. Neither one will control any weed already emerged prior to application and rain activation. Both are labeled for control of several winter annuals. Both can be applied in water, liquid fertilizer or nitrogen solutions. ***Insecticides can be added to reduce aphid and Hessian fly pressure***.

Zidua® is labeled for pre-emergence ryegrass and bluegrass control at 1.5 to 2 ozs. /acre. If ryegrass emerges prior to Zidua application, Axial XL® must be added to control emerged ryegrass. Axial XL® is not labeled to use liquid fertilizer as a carrier but can use up to seven gals. /acre of UAN solutions in a 50/50 water to UAN mix.

Zidua® is a granular and must be completely dissolved in water before adding to a spray tank. Once added, spray loads must stay under constant agitation to prevent settling.

Prowl H2O® , applied at 2 pts. /acre, offers a different mode of action which helps with resistance and can be helpful in controlling summer annuals in double-cropped beans if applied in winter or early spring.

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Note: both Zidua and Prowl H2O require rain to activate. Some fields may need additional treatments as part of a two–step process but this residual is important to provide some measure of ryegrass control with multiple germinating periods. Often no further application is necessary.

Osprey®, PowerFlex® and Axial® are post-emergence materials available to control ryegrass. The keys to utilizing these compounds are temperatures and surfactants. ***Average daily temperatures need to be at or above 45^{0}F for these materials to work well***. The labels have very specific recommendations for surfactants/additives and substituting surfactants, crop oils, etc. has caused failure in many cases. None provide residual control.

Osprey: has a label for control of ryegrass, bluegrass and several winter annuals when small. It does have restrictions on nitrogen applications: it must be applied two weeks before or after liquid nitrogen applications. Best when used with MSO as a surfactant.

Axial XL: has a wider window of application (no nitrogen application restriction) than Osprey but is not as broad of spectrum for weed control: no bluegrass control. No additional surfactant is required with Axial XL: can add up to 50/50 mix with U30.

PowerFlex HL: in the same herbicide family as Osprey; requires an 80/20 surfactant plus U30 as a surfactant; very limited winter annual control on label: can add some nitrogen; one application only.

Winter Weed Strategies

Pre-emergence: Sharpen® can be used for residual control of winter annuals for up to 30 days. Best results have come when adding to the burndown application.

Valor SX® (see ryegrass control) is labeled for winter annual control in wheat. Caution is advised to avoid crop injury.

Post-emergence: ***Winter annuals must be controlled early when weeds are small***. Harmony Extra® is still the standard to control winter annuals and garlic. Dicamba (Banvel, Clarity®) can be added at 2 to 4 ozs. /acre for better weed control. Hopefully, this application will wait for the February nitrogen topdress but in some cases, an earlier application will be needed.

Adding .75 pt. /acre of Buctril 4EC® with Harmony Extra® will help control resistant chickweed and large henbit along with cornflower.