



Crop Solutions that Work

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® AGRIS Co-operative Ltd. & Wanstead Farmers' Co-operative
Volume #10 Issue #13 June 13, 2018

Talking about weed control

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There has been a lot of talk of weed control lately. The main focus has been around glyphosate resistant weeds and new weeds we are experiencing. With our late spring in Essex County, it's become obvious we need to make sure we are using an integrated pest management approach to control all weeds.

Our weed control practices need to focus on all potential weeds we may have on any given field. As time has marched on this spring, I have noticed large populations of dandelions and Canada Thistle, weeds we all thought we had tackled years ago. I have also noticed prickly lettuce making a comeback along with spreading atriplex and a variety of weeds we haven't seen in any great numbers in years.

Most weed species we encounter can produce seeds that remain viable for decades in the soil. We need to understand every time we change a cultural practice, we change what is going on in the soil which can result in old seeds germinating and not being controlled by our current weed management program.

When we talk about weed management programs, we need to understand this includes almost everything we do. In the field from timing of planting and the type of planting equipment we use, establishing crop canopy, tillage both type and timing, nutrient applications, herbicide modes of action, rates and timing along with surfactant, water rates, water conditioners and drift reduction agents and the list goes on. These all play a role in how weeds are controlled or not controlled in any given field in any given year.

The other aspect of weed control we need to wrap our head around is why are we controlling the weeds. We don't control weeds to have dead weeds, we control weeds to maximize crop production. This is why the critical weed free period is so important as well as decreasing crop competition throughout the growing season and reducing or eliminating weed seed production for future years.



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Taking careful note of the weeds you are battling this year, what techniques worked and what didn't and also why they did or didn't work this will go a long way to helping your weed management strategies in the future. Careful weed management planning can help you save money and improve crop yields. The weed problems you have experienced this year and in years past can come back to haunt you if you don't plan accordingly.

Whether you have great weed control in all your fields this year or are struggling with some problems, now is the time to keep at the weeds for this year and make plans for the future. Don't let your guard down as one year of poor control will have lasting repercussions.

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