

► Weed Management In Corn: It Takes More Than You Think

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Weed management in corn is too often considered to be easy by many producers. Following the introduction of glyphosate-resistant (GR) corn, many producers only applied glyphosate and atrazine. Usually these herbicides would be applied post-emergence to 8-12 inch corn. However, there are many limitations to this treatment. Corn is susceptible to physical competition from weeds growing alongside corn from emergence through at least 6 weeks after emergence. As a consequence of allowing early-season weed competition, yield will be reduced. Therefore, planting corn in a weed-free seedbed and maintaining a weed-free environment is crucial. Burndown applications that control weeds at least 4-6 weeks prior to planting. Historically, pre-emergence followed by a postemergence herbicide applications are needed to maximize corn grain yield. However, corn planting date can influence when the first herbicide application is needed in Louisiana. Following a burndown herbicide application 4 to 6 weeks before planting, the first residual herbicide application can be delayed until corn is 8- to 12-inches in height if the corn is planted in late-February thru early-March. Conversely, if corn is planted in early-April, residual herbicides should be applied either preemergence to 4-inch corn.

The presence of herbicide-resistant weeds will need to be considered when determining a weed management program in corn. For example, if GR Palmer amaranth or GR johnsongrass is present, specific herbicides programs will need to be designed to address these weeds. Programs will be highlighted in presentation.

One issue that is often ignored is weed management following corn harvest. In Louisiana, corn is typically harvested in late July thru August. Following corn harvest, there are at least 2 months where environmental conditions promote weed growth and seed production, thus replenishing the soil seed-bank. This replenishment of weed seed, which may be the seeds herbicide resistant weeds, will impact subsequent years of crop production.

Notes:
