

Field Crops Newsletter

Granville and Person County
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Cereal Rye in Wheat. *Photo by Mikayla Berryhill*

Weed Control in Wheat: You Need a Plan!

Many growers start thinking about weed control in wheat during the late winter or early spring, around the time of topdressing. However, in many cases this is too late to kill or control many weeds in the field after they have germinated and had time to grow. So, it is important now to think about how you are going to control winter weeds. Here are some considerations:

Italian Ryegrass

This weed causes a constant struggle for NC growers. In the southern piedmont of North Carolina, there are confirmed locations where ryegrass has developed resistance to FOUR different herbicides: glyphosate, ALS-inhibitors (Osprey or Powerflex), ACCase-inhibitors (Holeon and Axial XL), and paraquat (Gramoxone). While we do not yet have this intense resistance in our area, it is important to keep it in mind when planning wheat herbicide programs to prevent resistance like this from spreading. You likely have ryegrass with resistance to at least one of the above herbicide groups, so pay close attention to how effective your herbicide applications are on weed populations.

One way to help the effectiveness of these post-emergent herbicides in areas where resistance is not yet running rampant is by utilizing pre-emergence or early post-emergence residual herbicides. These residual herbicides work by putting a "film" over the soil surface that will not allow weeds to germinate. This is especially effective in tillage situations, where it is thought that tillage can increase weed germination. Some examples include Anthem Flex, Zidua, Fierce, and Axiom. Incorporating these into your herbicide management plan for wheat can greatly improve the control of Italian Ryegrass.

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This newsletter is designed to give you up to date information on crops from NC State University and other sources. For more information:

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Weed Control for Wheat: You Need a Plan!

Annual Bluegrass

While not as much of an issue in many cases, annual bluegrass can cause some heartache for NC growers. The herbicide Osprey is a good option to control annual bluegrass if it is small but will not be effective if the grass is too big. Axiom is another option but must be activated at the correct time in order to be effective. PLEASE NOTE Axial XL and Powerflex do not control bluegrass.



Annual Ryegrass. Photo by NC State Extension.

Broadleaf Weeds

Some of the major broadleaf weeds that impact wheat include chickweed, cornflower, henbit, Virginia pepperweed, and wild radish. One of the most common herbicides to use for these broadleaf weeds is 2,4-D, but please note that 2,4-D does not control chickweed or henbit. Also, timing is critical to avoid injury to wheat. It should not be applied before tillering is completed because it can impact the development of tillers but should not be applied after jointing (or when the wheat “stands up”) because it can impact seed head development. Another good option is Harmony Extra SG (45 day plant back interval for tobacco), which is a premixed product. It, however, does not control cornflower well. A great option is to mix these two products together for optimal broadleaf weed control.



Cornflower. Photo by Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

How Hedging Can Help Farmers Reduce Loss From Low Prices

By Jenny Carleo

Planting a crop requires substantial up-front investment, yet the farmer will not know how much they will earn until the crop is sold. If the price can be set in advance, then the farmer would know more about their potential income.

How Does Hedging Work?

Hedging for grain crops uses a futures contract to bridge the gap between planting time and harvest time by acting as a substitute for the sale until the grain in the field is ready to be harvested and sold. Here are the steps the farmer would take to hedge:

Step 1: Placing the Hedge

The hedging process begins early in the growing season, some time after planting but months before harvest. The farmer goes to a buyer, typically through a futures exchange like the [Chicago Mercantile Exchange \(CME\)](#), and sells a contract. The farmer and buyer agree on the price that will be paid at harvest time.

Step 2: Lifting the Hedge

After selling a contract the farmer is legally obligated to deliver grain after harvest. There are two options they can take to lift the hedge at this point.

Option 1: He or she can meet this obligation by delivering as agreed in the futures contract. The farmer will receive the price at which they sold the futures contract, no matter what current prices are. When using the futures market to hedge a crop the delivery location for grain is typically somewhere in the midwest. Delivering 1 contract (5000 bushels) to the midwest will cost the farmer money in shipping costs, so this option is rarely chosen.

How Hedging Can Help Reduce Loss *CONTINUED...*

Option 2: If the farmer does not want to deliver grain to the specified location, they can offset the commitment by returning to the futures exchange and purchasing back the same contract. The farmer is no longer obligated to deliver to the midwest and can now sell their grain locally. In this case, gains or losses from the futures market will cancel out the lower or higher price they receive from selling their crop to a local buyer.

For example, if prices decline 50 cents per bushel between when the farmer placed the hedge and when they lifted the hedge, they profit 50 cents from the futures transactions but receive a price for the physical grain that is 50 cents per bushel lower than at the time the hedge was placed:

In the above example the farmer profited \$2,500 from the futures transactions and also \$42,500 from selling their grain to a local elevator. The combined total of both the futures transactions and the local sale is \$45,000 for the 5,000 bushels. It is important to note that there are always costs to reducing risk, sometimes these are obvious in the case of fees or the cost of shipping to the midwest in the rare case of higher grain prices. But the type of costs will depend on the hedging tool. For a futures contract hedge there are details of the futures marketplace which are important considerations – for example, while the hedge is in place, the farmer is required to hold cash in a futures margin account.

There are many ways to hedge, at its core hedging is about risk management. For this reason, a successful hedge will not necessarily increase revenue, but it will reduce potential losses.

This project is funded by the NC Small Grain Growers Association. For more information on [NC](#) wheat visit the [North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association](#).

Nearly 1,500 Farmers & Producers Reject EPA Herbicide Strategy

If you read last month's newsletter, you likely saw that the EPA proposed a new herbicide strategy to appease the Endangered Species Act on pesticide labels. Please see the update from the American Soybean Association:

Nearly 1,500 farmers, ranchers, pesticide applicators, and agricultural producers from across the country have come together to voice strong disapproval to EPA, criticizing the agency's Endangered Species Act herbicide strategy framework proposal. The agricultural producers, who called for withdrawal of the strategy in a letter sent to EPA, expressed grave concern over the impacts it would likely have on U.S. agricultural production and conservation efforts.



The hundreds and hundreds of farmers and other individuals raised numerous issues with the proposal in the letter, including that it is very complex and makes it difficult for producers and applicators to even determine their regulatory requirements. There were also concerns with the proposal lacking sufficient, affordable options with which growers can comply. For many producers, the new regulations would cost their farms millions of dollars, while others may be unable to comply at all, jeopardizing their access to needed herbicides and thus threatening their businesses.

“Weeds are one of the most devastating pests farmers face,” said Alan Meadows, a soybean grower from Halls, Tennessee, and director of the American Soybean Association. “Weeds can steal limited water and nutrients from the soil and crowd out your crop. If not properly managed, they can quickly overtake a field and even result in total crop failure. If the herbicide strategy or other regulations deprive us of the tools needed to manage these destructive pests, many farms across the U.S. will struggle to stay afloat.”

Farmers Reject EPA Herbicide Strategy *CONTINUED...*

Importantly, the letter also cites concerns farmers have with the proposal's likely impact on the environment. Many conservation practices, such as reduced tillage and cover crops, are highly dependent on herbicide access. Most growers in the U.S. terminate their cover crops with herbicides before planting their primary crop. Herbicides also afford farmers an alternative to tilling the soil to eradicate weeds, allowing for soil carbon sequestration and significant reductions in both soil erosion and tractor fuel use. These and other environmental benefits could be at risk if farmers lose access to herbicides under this proposal.

Submit Soil Samples Now to Avoid Delays, Peak-Season Fees

As we head into cooler weather, fall is the best time to amend your lawns, especially fescue lawns and landscape areas, with lime and fertilizer and to start fall vegetable gardens.

Homeowners, gardeners, community gardeners, golf course superintendents, and turf consultants are encouraged to submit samples now to the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agronomic Services soil test to ensure faster turnaround time on results and avoid peak-season testing fees.

"Soil test results completed this year are good for the next two to three years. So, if you have not tested your soil in a while, now is a good time to consider submitting soil samples," said Jagathi Kamalakanthan, soil lab agronomist. "Soil testing is free except during the peak laboratory season, which starts Dec. 1 and runs through March 31, 2024."

Samples must physically arrive on the Agronomic Services' loading dock Nov. 30 or earlier to avoid being charged a peak-season fee. Date of shipping, delivery to a local Cooperative Extension Center, or postmarking is not considered when determining the assessment of peak-season fees.

"This year the Agronomic Services Division is renewing its efforts to improve operational efficiency and optimize our customer service. To help us in this mission, we are asking that growers pay particular attention to the submission process," Kamalakanthan said. "Small details really matter when you consider that the Soil Testing Lab processes about 300,000 samples annually."

New this year. Soil samples submitted without adequate grower, consultant, and/or sample information will not proceed through the lab but will be set aside. This information is essential to associate samples with the correct existing client account or to establish a new unique client account. Samples will be held for at least five days, and an attempt will be made to obtain the missing information. Due to limited storage space, samples cannot be held indefinitely.

To avoid samples ending up in the "holding area," simply follow the instructions listed below. In doing so, you will help the Soil Testing Lab be more efficient, and in turn, avoid unnecessary delays in sample processing.

- Only use soil sample boxes provided by NCDA&CS. Soil sample boxes and submission forms are provided at local county Cooperative Extension Centers and at the Agronomic Services Division, 4300 Reedy Creek Road, Raleigh, NC 27607. Fill the soil box to the red line found on the outside of the box. Required information on the box includes the client's name, address, and sample ID.
- With your samples, send a completely filled homeowner soil submission form, including a crop code for plant-specific recommendations; the list of codes is found on the second page of the sample submission form. Since soil test results are emailed to clients, it is extremely important that a valid email address is provided. Additionally, providing a current phone number is highly encouraged as it is helpful for faster contact if there is an issue with soil sample submission. For convenience, a fillable soil submission form for routine homeowner samples can be found at [https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/documents/HOMEOWNER_SOIL_SAMPLE_SUBMISSION_SHEET AD15.pdf](https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/documents/HOMEOWNER_SOIL_SAMPLE_SUBMISSION_SHEET_AD15.pdf)
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- Make sure that information listed on your soil submission form matches what is on your sample boxes.

Submit Soil Samples Now **CONTINUED...**

- Save a copy/photo of your sample submission form for your records.
- Ensure that sample boxes are packed securely inside a sturdy shipper to avoid damage during transport. Do not use padded mailing envelopes. For faster delivery, private carriers such as UPS or FedEx deliver directly to the Agronomic building rather than an off-site mail center that USPS is required to use. Some Cooperative County Extension offices collect samples from homeowners for delivery to the division; clients are encouraged to make sure that delivery meets their intended expectations and needs.
- If you have access to a computer and printer, use the online data entry feature on PALS (<https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pals>) to ensure the most accurate delivery of sample information to the lab but enclose a copy of the submission form with soil sample boxes.

Clients are encouraged to look at current turnaround time that estimates the time for results. This changes frequently during the year. Go to <https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pals>. The sample turnaround time is based on the date the samples are received at our location.

Following these guidelines will help the Agronomic Services soil lab deliver the best and most efficient services to customers. Contact the Agronomic Services Division at 919-664-1600 with any questions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Farm Labor Regulation Update

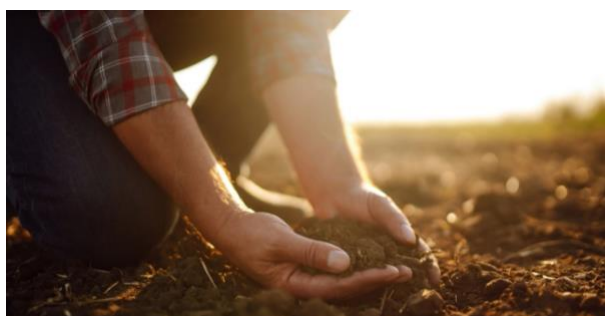
THERE ARE MAJOR CHANGES TO H2A LABOR REGULATION – IF YOU PLAN TO HAVE H2A LABOR ON YOUR FARM NEXT YEAR PLEASE PLAN TO COME TO THIS EVENT!

Wednesday, November 15th 8AM-10AM

- Granville County Expo and Convention Center (4185 US-15, Oxford)
- Drinks and snacks will be provided
- Register at go.ncsu.edu/farmlaborupdate



Photo by Eric Waters.



Person County Farm City Breakfast

Friday, November 9th

- County Office Building (304 S. Morgan St., Roxboro, NC)
- Speaker: Dr. Rachel Vann on the Plant Sciences Initiative at NC State University
- Breakfast will be provided
- More information to come

USDA is now Hiring Pathway Student Trainees Nationwide

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are hiring pathway student trainees in multiple locations. Recruitment and relocation incentives may be offered and salary ranges from \$33,241 - \$43,801 per year. Please share with any interested students, and to view the available positions, go to <https://www.usajobs.gov/Search/Results?d=AG&hp=student&hp=graduates&p=1&s=enddate&sd=asc>.

ABOUT N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a strategic partnership of NC State Extension, The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, USDA-NIFA, and 101 local governments statewide. Extension professionals in all 100 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee translate research-based education from our state's land-grant universities, NC State and N.C. A&T, into everyday solutions. Extension specializes in agriculture, youth, communities, food, health, and the environment by responding to local needs.