

To: Local News

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“Views with Van”

Control of mustards in wheat - Timely treatment is important

Too often producers do not notice mustard weeds in their wheat fields until the mustards start to bloom in the spring. As a result, producers often do not think about control until that time.

To minimize yield losses, mustards should be controlled by late winter or very early spring, before the stems begin to elongate. If mustards are present in the fall, they can be controlled with ALS-inhibiting herbicides such as Ally, Amber, Finesse, Affinity, Rave, Olympus, or PowerFlex. Huskie, Talinor, Quelex, 2,4-D, and MCPA can also provide good control of most mustards. Dicamba and Starane are not very effective for mustard control.

In the late winter or early spring, blue mustard is perhaps the most difficult of the winter annual broadleaf weeds to control because it bolts very early. To be effective on blue mustard, herbicides typically need to be applied in late February or early March. Thus, 2, 4-D often is applied too late to be effective on blue mustard.

Flixweed and tansy mustard should be treated when they are no larger than two to three inches across and two to three inches tall. As these plants become larger, the control decreases dramatically. Ester formulations of 2, 4-D and MCPA are more effective on tansy mustard and flixweed. Field pennycress is easier to control than tansy mustard or flixweed. Herbicide applications made before the pennycress bolts are usually effective. Wheat should be fully tillered before applying 2, 4-D or tillering will be inhibited and wheat yields may be decreased.

Most ALS-inhibiting herbicides control winter annual mustards very well, although there are populations of bushy wall flower (treacle mustard) and flixweed in Kansas that are ALS-resistant and cannot be controlled by these products.

The best approach to control ALS resistant broadleaf weeds is to use other herbicides or tank-mixes with 2, 4-D, MCPA, Huskie, or Talinor. MCPA can be applied after the wheat is in the 3-leaf stage; but as mentioned above, 2,4-D should not be applied until after wheat is fully tillered. None of these herbicides have much residual control, so the majority of weeds need to be emerged and actively growing at the time of treatment.

Quelex can be applied from the 2-leaf up to flag leaf emergence growth stages of wheat and should be applied in combination with nonionic surfactant or oil concentrate for control of small, actively growing weeds.

Some producers commonly apply ALS herbicides with fertilizer in January or February. Unfortunately, MCPA, 2,4-D, and Huskie are most effective when applied to actively growing weeds, so application when weeds are dormant may not provide good control.

Crop rotation with corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, cotton, or sunflowers is a good way of managing mustards as long as they are controlled in the spring prior to producing seed. Crop rotation will usually

result in a gradual reduction of mustard populations in the future as the seedbank in the soil gradually decreases.

For more information go to ksre.ksu.edu and search for “Kansas weeds: Know your mustard species”.