

News Column
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Late-winter preplant applications for kochia control

Producers should begin soon in planning their program for controlling kochia. The spread of glyphosate-resistant kochia populations throughout western Kansas, and the difficulty growers have had controlling these populations, suggest that control measures should begin prior to emergence of kochia.

Major flushes of kochia emerge in late February to early March and into April. If allowed to emerge, postemergence herbicide applications often will not provide adequate control. Incomplete control of these dense populations is likely in these situations. When the kochia is glyphosate-resistant and complete herbicide coverage is not possible, results can be very poor when trying to use postemergence products to control dense populations. The dense populations may also be stressed, which reduces the effectiveness of postemergence herbicide applications.

The choice of herbicides for effective preemergence control of kochia in February and early March will vary depending on subsequent cropping intentions.

Fields going to corn or sorghum this spring

For fields that will be planted to corn and sorghum this spring, a combination of glyphosate (using a minimum of 0.75 lb. ae/acre) with herbicides that have PRE and POST activity on kochia is most valuable. Tank mixing 8 to 16 oz. of dicamba with 1 to 2 pints of atrazine will control existing broadleaf and grass weeds, and will provide extended preemergence control of kochia often into May. An application of Clarity alone, suggests that a pint provides better control than 8 oz. However, a combination of atrazine and Clarity is better than Clarity alone.

December applications have also been effective in managing kochia. Corvus+atrazine, Scoparia+atrazine, and Atrazine+Clarity were among the best treatments in field trials. February applications generally benefit from the addition of Banvel. If atrazine is included only corn or sorghum can be planted. If atrazine+Scoparia or Corvus are applied, only corn can be planted in the spring. Note: The 24c Special local need label for use of Scoparia to control kochia in fallow or ecofallow has 4-month plant-back restriction to corn and 6-month plant-back restriction to sorghum.

The best timing for this application is January through the first week of March but prior to kochia emergence. The later it gets, the more likely there will be some small, emerged kochia, which increases the risk of control failure. If producers wait until later to apply the burndown and preemergence herbicide in the same application, the kochia will be larger and most likely will not be controlled. If that occurs, the surviving plants will go on to cause problems throughout the growing season.

Other herbicides that could be tank mixed with the glyphosate ahead of corn or sorghum include Lexar EZ or Lumax EZ, or for corn only 3 to 4 fl oz. of Corvus, Balance Flexx or 1.5 to 2.5 oz. of Scoparia herbicide. As mentioned previously, the 24c Special local need label for use of Scoparia to control kochia in fallow or ecofallow has 4-month plant-back restriction to corn and 6-month plant-back restriction to sorghum.

The addition of atrazine is the key for the most effective control with these herbicides. The addition of Banvel did not increase kochia control with Corvus+atrazine or Balance Flexx+atrazine in 2012, but did increase control with Scoparia+atrazine in Feb 2016. When marginal rainfall is received for the initial activation, Banvel, which is very soluble, is still able to be activated and provide significant kochia control while atrazine and other herbicides may not be activated. This buys time for additional rainfall and full activation of all the herbicides.

If you would like further information an upcoming “Weed Control Update in Field Crops” meeting will be held on Monday, February 27th at the Agricultural Research Center – Hays, 1232 240th Avenue. It will start at 11 a.m. and conclude at 2:30 p.m., a noon meal is included. RSVP is requested for the meal count by Friday, February 24th. Call Ellis Co. Ext. (785) 628-9430 or email Theresa tam3@ksu.edu Also before the weed meeting there will be a Sugarcane Aphid Management Strategies update, starting at 9:30 a.m. in the auditorium. Sarah Zukoff, SW Area Extension Entomologist will show information on what strategies sorghum growers can utilize both before and during the growing season to help with Sugarcane Aphids. If you are interested in attending both or just one of these events, you are welcome to do so.

Next week’s column will address early spring kochia control for fields of standing wheat or going to wheat this fall.

Information provided by Curtis Thompson, Extension Weed Control specialist.