



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

For Further Information Contact:

Mark Badertscher

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator

Phone – 419-674-2297

E-Mail – badertscher.4@osu.edu

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Giant Ragweed Top County Weed

Hardin County – Each year before soybean harvest, county Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educators conduct a county weed survey. The purpose of this survey is to determine the type and amount of weeds that are infesting farm fields. Another reason is to develop an understanding of which weeds are becoming resistant to herbicides used by farmers. Once these determinations are made, weed scientists at The Ohio State University develop weed control programs which are then passed off to local county Extension Educators to make recommendations for local farmers. The goal of these recommendations is to help farmers gain control of these weeds so that their yield-limiting impact is reduced, increasing production and profitability for the farmer.

Hardin County's weed survey was conducted September 14 in the southern part of the county. The route taken was east on State Route 309, circling around the southern edge of the county, and returning from the west on State Route 309. September 17 the northern part of the county was surveyed, starting on State Route 67 going east. The route continued around the northern edge of the county and returned from the west on State Route 701. Stops were made every mile at each crossroad, checking the soybean fields from the road. Data on the type of weeds found and the degree of infestations were documented. This information was then summarized on a spreadsheet to be sent to the University. Details from this survey will be used as part of the pesticide recertification training meetings January through March around the West Central Ohio Region.

A total of 175 fields were surveyed in Hardin County this fall. Giant ragweed was found to be a problem in 39% of these fields, followed by marestail (21%), waterhemp (12%), volunteer corn (11%), giant foxtail/grasses (10%), velvetleaf (6%), redroot pigweed (6%), and common

lambquarter (3%). The highest degree of infestation in individual fields was giant foxtail/grasses, waterhemp, giant ragweed, and marehail. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the 175 soybean fields surveyed were found to be weed-free. Fields were evaluated as weed-free, occasional (occasional individual plants), large patches (patch of 8 or more plants scattered in field), or widespread (numerous patches or individual plants across the field) for each species in the field.

Waterhemp is a spreading weed problem across the county that farmers will need to understand. This weed is a concern because it produces a minimum of hundreds of thousands of seeds per plant, germinates throughout most of the season, and requires greater herbicide costs to properly manage. If farmers find waterhemp in a field, they really should be treating it like Palmer amaranth. All that can be done now is to remove plants from the field by hand before harvest in plastic bags without spreading seed and prepare to manage waterhemp better next season.

Combines will spread this weed seed, so avoid patches during harvest or wait to harvest this field last and then thoroughly clean out the combine is a strategy that can be used. Areas that have waterhemp infestations will require a strict pre-emergence and post-emergence program with additional residual herbicides during each application. Farmers will then need to rotate herbicide chemistries and modes of action yearly because of the extreme ability of this weed to become resistant to herbicides. If no action is taken in these infested areas, this weed will quickly take over a field, further increasing herbicide costs and limiting yield.