



GROWING SMARTER

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NEWS & INFORMATION TO HELP YOU GROW

For Better Weed Control, GO BACK TO THE BASICS

Time-honored practices and rotation methods can make a big difference

Weed control has been a challenge for growers for as long as farming has existed, but fortunately, people keep finding new and better ways to deal with them.

Ironically, some of those newer solutions have created other problems of their own, especially when weeds become resistant to herbicides. Every year, more species of broadleaves and grasses are developing resistance to certain chemicals, especially glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup® products. According to an international survey, 41 types of weeds around the world are known to be resistant to glyphosate, with at least 16 species identified in the U.S. In Arizona, the most common one appears to be Palmer amaranth, or pigweed.

"Resistance has become a huge problem, and it will continue to get worse," said Dr. Bill McCloskey, Extension Weed Specialist at the University of Arizona.

"Over time, growers just relied too much on over-the-top treatments of Roundup," said Dennis Osborn, Crop Protection Sales Manager, Fertizona. "Now we have resistant weed species and we need to break that cycle."

Osborn suggested that another factor contributing to glyphosate resistance is stacked-trait technology. As cotton growers invest in Bt genetics for insect control, the seeds are generally bundled with herbicide-tolerance genes.

"You're paying for a package deal," he said. "Now when you want insect control, you get the weed

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Setting the Record Straight About Food Safety

Recently I read a great article calling for our industry to fight back against popular misinformation about food safety.

Written by noted veterinarian Don Sanders and titled, "Science education needed to counteract food phobias and fables on social media — and you can help," the editorial addressed how people often ignore scientific research and fall victim to unrealistic concerns about today's food supply. There's a growing demand for products labeled "organic" or "antibiotic-free" or "hormone-free," even though many consumers don't really understand the terms.

One of the biggest fears we constantly deal with is the reaction to food products coming from GMOs – genetically modified organisms. Dr. Sanders pointed out that genetic engineering has been used in agriculture for centuries to increase productivity and improve crops' resistance to disease and drought.

He described the work of Gregor Mendel, a 19th-century Austrian monk who experimented with cross-breeding peas in his garden. Known as the father of genetics, Mendel discovered how to select peas with certain desirable traits to pass down from generation to generation. That led to breakthroughs such as seedless watermelons, hybrids of corn, wheat and cotton, and superior livestock. But now some people balk at genetic concepts.

Sanders wrote "Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms help spread the misinformation like wildfire." He added, "Food producers can use social media — and face-to-face conversations with non-farming friends, relatives and acquaintances — to help set the record straight about modern agriculture and food safety."

It's going to be a big challenge to gain wider acceptance about the safety of genetically engineered foods but as Sanders concluded, "With your help in spreading the word, we could get there sooner."

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Jim Compton
President, Fertilzona &
Compton Ag Services

"We need to go back to simple strategies."

– Dennis Osborn, Crop Protection Sales Manager, Fertizona



Practice Effective Crop Rotation

Story continued from cover

control component whether you want it or not, so you end up using the glyphosate, glufosinate or some other proprietary chemistry."

Trust what's worked before

"I often say we need to go back to simple strategies that were effective for a long time," Osborn added. "We're talking about proven steps like pre-plant or pre-emergent herbicides, tank mixes, and especially long-lasting residual products."

"I like to recommend a pre-plant incorporated application of Prowl® or Treflan®, or their generic formulations," said McCloskey. "Because of our soils in Arizona, they work really well on pigweed here. I've had growers do that successfully and then say to me, 'I'd forgotten how good these products are.'"

The key is to take an integrated, proactive approach to weeds before they develop herbicide resistance and become harder to control. In addition to pre-emergent and residual products, it's essential to use chemicals with multiple modes of action to attack the resistance threat from different angles.

"We have good success on pigweed with Diuron and with Caparol® at layby as residuals in

certain soils," Osborn said. "We've also been looking at newer chemistries to the area, such as acetochlor. The product brand name is Warrant®."

Diuron 4L is a highly effective, broad-spectrum residual herbicide registered for pre- and post-emergent control of many broadleaf and grassy weeds. Caparol (prometryn) is a selective residual herbicide that works on emerged weeds as well as later-germinating ones. In cotton, Warrant herbicide can be used pre-plant, at planting, pre-, or post-emergence. The optimum application is 1.5 quarts/acre when cotton is in the 2- to 3-leaf stage.

Other beneficial strategies

Another time-honored cultural practice that often gets overlooked today is the basic concept of rotating your crops. When certain acres are exposed to the same plant species and chemicals year after year, it increases the likelihood of developing resistance in weeds, insects and diseases.

"Crop rotation is definitely important," Osborn said. "It's really hard to break up the weed spectrum when you just plant cotton to cotton to cotton."

Effective crop rotation can provide more benefits than disrupting resistance threats. A great example is replacing natural nitrogen in your soil by rotating to alfalfa.

Another strategy Osborn suggested was to ask, "Am I growing for a potential seed contract?" If that's the case, then the growing season will typically be shorter, and therefore your spectrum of residual herbicides is different. If not, Osborn emphasized that Arizona farmers should take advantage of our long growing season and plant for maximum yield, rather than just hope for a premium with an early pick on seed cotton.

"When that crop is in the field longer, you get more opportunities for extended weed control and top yields," he said. "But for whatever you plant, the key is to start clean and stay clean."

For more information about effective weed control strategies, contact your local Fertizona or Compton Ag office or visit www.fertizona.com.

Jack Seiler Farms, Palo Verde, California

The Seiler family brings passion to what they do

Jack Seiler has the sound of a happy man.

As he describes the farming operation that he and his father started in Ehrenberg, Arizona, more than 40 years ago, Jack shares a proud but modest tone of satisfaction and gratitude about what his family has achieved. And now that the day-to-day management responsibilities of the farm are transitioning to his son, Ryan, Jack sounds equally enthusiastic about the other pursuits and opportunities in his life.

Today Jack Seiler Farms is a 4000-acre operation situated at the south end of the Palo Verde Valley in California, where the farm relocated in 1991. Their main crops are cotton and hay, but they also grow some lemons and dates. The farm has a full-time staff of 12 employees, with seasonal help joining them as needed at harvest times. In recent years, Ryan Seiler has increasingly been taking more of a key leadership position and decision-making role as he helps Jack to keep things running smoothly.

"He has a passion for it, and a strong work ethic," Jack said confidently about his son. "He knows that farming isn't just a job, it's a lifestyle." Ryan is also raising three children of his own, so the Seilers have great hopes of a fourth generation carrying on the family legacy for years to come.

Now that Ryan is relieving his Dad of most of the daily farm duties, Jack said he has more time to enjoy other things which are important to him, such as serving on the Board of Trustees for the Palo Verde Irrigation District, where he helps growers to protect their water rights. "That's an issue that's close to my heart," he added. When not working around the farm, Jack also enjoys traveling with his wife and participating in barbecue competitions, which he apparently takes quite seriously. When asked if he has a specialty menu item, Jack said, "It's really hard for anybody to beat my brisket."



The Seilers have been doing business for many years with Fertizona and Compton Ag Services in Blythe, California, and Jack is quick to say good things about working with them.

"They have a wonderful staff over there at Compton Ag, and good equipment," he said. "They really help us a lot."

"It's a great working relationship," agreed Diane Gray, Operations Manager at Compton Ag Services—Blythe. "The Seilers are a very respected family. I've known Jack and Ryan for a long time, and they're not just customers, both of them are our friends."

"We can go to them with any problems we have – whether it's about soil, fertilizer, agronomy or something else – and they always give us the right answers," Jack added. "I trust Fertizona completely."

"I trust Fertizona completely."

– Jack Seiler,
Jack Seiler Farms,
Palo Verde, California

Farewell to Lamont Lacy

Fertizona's long-time Credit Manager heads off to retirement

There's a classic old Western saying about a cowboy "riding off into the sunset," which typically refers to a good guy having finished the work he needed to do at a certain place, and then he saddles up to look for his next adventure down the road.

In the case of Lamont Lacy, Fertizona's Credit Manager, that expression truly fits. After a successful 50-year career in agricultural finance, Lamont retired at the end of February, and now he plans to spend more time at his hobby, which is team roping.

"I also want to do some traveling," he said. "My wife and I are both from rodeo families. Our bucket list consists of seeing some of the major rodeos we haven't seen before, such as the Pendleton Round-Up, Cheyenne Frontier Days, and the Calgary Stampede."

Lamont has been a familiar presence around Fertizona since joining us 26 years ago, following 24 years with Farm Credit Services. Throughout that time, he's earned a great reputation for his exceptional knowledge and integrity.

"It's been a very good place to work, and very good people to work with," Lamont said, reflecting on his career with Fertizona. "Jimmy and Cindy Compton have done so much for me and my family. A lot of things add up to make me grateful to have worked for them."

Happy trails, Lamont. We all wish you the best!



New Hires

SHEA NIETO
Casa Grande

RENE ALCALA
Roll

BERNARDO VARGAS
Compton Ag Services

DELORES MEJIA
Casa Grande

RUBEN PERALTA CORRAL
Compton Ag Services

The Best is Yet to Come

Sarah Eischeid is making a big difference . . . and big plans

Sarah Eischeid, Sales Support Specialist, Fertizona—Willcox, already has a wide range of responsibilities for the company, but by all indications, she's going to be an even more valuable asset in the years ahead.

Sarah grew up in Southeastern Arizona "surrounded by agriculture," but was more intrigued by the business aspects of crop production. So when she went to college at New Mexico State University, it made sense for her to study Agricultural Business and Economics. While at NMSU, Sarah worked with entomologist Brad Lewis, Bureau Chief of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, learning about insect challenges, pesticide efficacies and other topics vital to Southwestern growers. She was also very active with the National Agri-Marketing Association for a number of years, and participated in national and international NAMA student competitions.

After graduation, Sarah was on a trip to New Zealand when she heard about a chance for a job with Fertizona, and she actually came home early for her interview. Fortunately, that process went well, and Sarah was hired in November of 2012.

In her current position, Sarah handles a variety of essential behind-the-scenes functions, including purchasing, forecasting, inventory, sales support and more. She's also preparing to earn her PCA license in December.

"I love working at Fertizona," she said enthusiastically, "especially when I can help the salesmen and our customers. We discuss their needs and watch the trends, and then we

run the numbers to help get a better feel for exactly what people need. By keeping constant communication with growers, we can stay a step ahead to help them avoid problems that might come up when things change, which they do."

As much as she enjoys her job, Sarah admits she's an outdoor person, and she's excited about the opportunity to take her PCA training out into the field someday.

"I want to be successful, and my father always told me to work for what I want in life," she said. "I'm not completely sure yet where my career is going, but I know it's going to be a great ride."

In her spare time, Sarah enjoys hiking, reading, and exploring things with her two nephews. She also recently started scuba diving. Given her great attitude and commitment to excel, we know she'll soon be good at that, too.

"I love working at Fertizona, especially when I can help the salesmen and our customers."

– Sarah Eischeid,
Customer Service Specialist,
Willcox



Call In the Lawyers

Corporate mergers and legal issues keep making news

In recent years, the agriculture industry has seen many changes at high levels as major corporations merge, consolidate, buy up competitors and spin off technology.

One noteworthy topic is the proposed purchase of Monsanto (makers of Roundup-based products, seed genetics and other leading products) by Bayer AG, the German life-sciences and chemical giant. Bayer's \$63.5 billion offer was accepted in 2016, but the megamerger faces ongoing regulatory challenges and political pushback, both here and in Europe.

With seed and chemical costs rising, farmers around the world

are understandably worried about things getting even worse if there is less competition among big suppliers. European antitrust investigators have twice extended their timeline for approval of the deal -- with the deadline pushed back to April 5 -- and Bayer is making more concessions. Last October the company agreed to sell parts of its seed and chemical businesses to BASF for about \$7 billion.

According to a statement from Bayer, new concessions being offered to satisfy the reviewers "are very significant and we are confident they fully address the European Commission's concerns."¹

Corporate agribusiness lawyers are also very busy with a full workload of ongoing lawsuits, many of which address dicamba and glyphosate.

In July 2017, California passed legislation to officially label glyphosate as a

carcinogen, although most evidence does not support that claim, based on normal product usage. There are accusations that conclusions reached in 2015 by the International Agency for Research on Cancer used only selected information to make their decisions about glyphosate.

Earlier this year, Monsanto announced it has support from eleven states in its legal challenges to stop California from requiring cancer warnings on glyphosate products. Monsanto court documents stated "the warnings would be misleading because there is no definite link between glyphosate and cancer."²

Watch for more updates from Fertizona about these legal battles which affect how you farm.

¹ Reuters, February 5, 2018

² St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 4, 2018



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