

USDA Warns That Farmers Will Have Hard Fight Ahead To Destroy Weeds In 1981

Farmers and weed scientists alike have been battling this perennial weed for years with only moderate success.

But 1981 may be the worst year on record, if most weed seeds left in the soil this year germinate. In Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas, fields with serious johnsongrass populations may have doubled, because of last season's summer-long drought, warns C. D. McWhorter, Southern Weed Science Laboratory (USDA), Stoneville, MS. He claims dry weather hurt herbicide activity. McWhorter checks over 100,000 acres in these states annually for johnsongrass. In 1980, 60-63 per cent of

MidSouth soybean fields he monitored suffered some losses.

Although in Mississippi the grassy weed is generally accepted as a statewide pest, he adds, it's heaviest in the northern counties and inside river bottoms.

McWhorter wouldn't get an argument from one Mississippi farmer. Ham Bishop, a Minter City soybean grower, usually finds thick johnsongrass stands on half his 600 soybean acres each season, despite repeated dinitroaniline (Treflan, Prowl) treatments. For the past two years (one season under an experimental use permit), Bishop has been spraying 3M's Vistar Herbicide to catch john-

songrass escapes. Under good moisture conditions, he rates Vistar Herbicide control at 80-90 per cent.

In Missouri, the seven-county Bootheel section has the state's highest levels of johnsongrass, with some infested counties along the Missouri river. These low-lying, poorly drained river bottoms are ideal for weed proliferation. In addition, flooding every seven or eight years re-infests land where johnsongrass might have been controlled. According to Dr. Harold Kerr, Extension weed control specialist, University of Missouri, Columbia some 50,000 acres suffer serious yield reductions, primarily in southeastern counties; other johnsongrass problems in the state are spotty. That represents a fair portion of state soybean and only one-fourth of the farmers there are doing something about it, he observes.

Persistent johnsongrass is a headache in Tennessee,

but pretty much limited to the West and Middle two-thirds of the state. In fact, johnsongrass levels in corn almost put state farmers out of business before Eradicane came along, recalls Wayne Flinchum, Extension soybean specialist at UT's Jackson experiment station.

"Right now most growers are using double rates of dinitroanilines and coming back with postemergence herbicides," adds Flinchum. There's one thing they aren't doing, however, he says. "They aren't using a total management concept," Flinchum points out; "by that I mean using the correct tillage methods, like cutting up johnsongrass rhizomes." Flinchum estimates that johnsongrass, left untreated, can cause 40 to 50 per cent soybean losses.

Kentucky's johnsongrass prospers in its western counties, but has been pushing into the state's central river bottoms. Out of

a total soybean crop of half-million acres, nearly 40 per cent of affected, making it the state's number one weed enemy.

"We've done tests with postemergence herbicides on johnsongrass, says Bill Witt, University of Kentucky weed control specialist," and found that with no control yields dropped from 35 to 20 bushels, a 43 per cent reduction. On some fields johnsongrass simply takes over. It can become a total loss situation."

He says the most control methods call for a 2x Treflan application on a three-year basis and spot salvage treatments with Roundup.

"Also, we now have an earlier post-spray with Vistar Herbicide," Witt adds. The 3M herbicide is an over-the-top treatment before johnsongrass is headed out.

In the Southeast, johnsongrass losses are scattered. For North and South

Carolina, the perennial weed pest is located primarily in the coastal plains and Piedmont. In South Carolina, it's believed to hurt soybean production on 75,000 acres, with reductions ranging from 25

to 50 per cent - a higher figure than North Carolina. Other Atlantic coast states, like Virginia and Maryland, with less than a half-million soybean acres apiece, report up to 15 per cent of their total crop injured.

Increasingly, as pre-plant applications fail for a variety of reasons (weather, poor incorporation), more farmers are relying on postemergence herbicides for grass breakthroughs, say weed scientists.

Death Claims Mrs. Wheeler, Va. Native

Mrs. Dena Gay Wheeler, 77, died at ElderLodge on Paradise Road on June 13. She was retired from Edenton Cotton Mills.

Mrs. Wheeler, the widow of Fred Wheeler, was born in Brunswick County, Va., on June 22, 1903. She was the daughter of the late Riley and Josie Bly Gay.

Surviving is a son, Mitchell Ward of Clarksville, Tenn.; two daughters: Mrs. Peggy Forehand of Edenton; and Mrs. Mary Nixon of Greensboro; a sister, Mrs. Lillie Wheeler of Edenton; 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were held at 4 P. M. Tuesday in the Williford - Barham

Funeral Chapel. Rev. E. C. Alexander and Rev. Preston Cayton officiated. Burial was in Beaver Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were: Thomas and Wilbert Harris, Fred Ashley, Ed Owens, Sam Sawyer and Ray Bateman.

Letter To The Editor

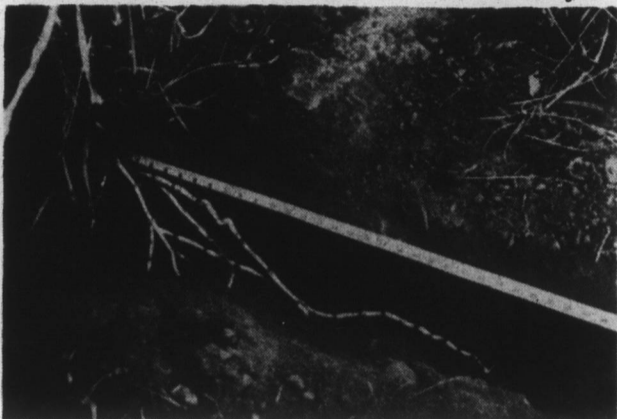
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GRASS ALERT - Watch out for johnsongrass this season. Scientists at USDA's Southern Weed Science Laboratory, Stoneville, MS., predict more johnsongrass than ever in soybean fields. The grassy pest spreads by seed and underground rhizomes that can grow a foot per month in tilled soils.

Bunch Taken In Death

Mrs. Bertha Mae Bunch Hammond, 51, 320 West Queen Street, died Friday at her home. She formerly worked at Edenton Cotton Mills.

Mrs. Hammond was a native of Chowan County. She was born April 20, 1930, daughter of Mrs. Addie Holmes Bunch of Edenton and the late Joseph Z. Bunch.

She was married to Adney Hammond.

In addition to her mother and husband, surviving is a son, David J. Mizelle of Wilmington; two daughters: Mrs. Ruth Ann Beaman of Greenville; and Judy Kay Mizelle of Edenton; a brother, Zane Bunch of Edenton; a sister, Mrs. Faye Harrell of Edenton; and three grandchildren.

She was a member of Immanuel Baptist Church. Funeral services were held at 3 P. M. Sunday in Williford - Barham Funeral

Chapel. Rev. Ashby Browder officiated and burial was in Beaver Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were: Mark, Robert and Roland Harrell; Richard Head, Richard Holstead, and Mark Glasglow.

Sen. East Cites CIA Failure

Continued From Page 7-B formation" campaigns which "befuddle the minds of many journalists, academic experts and even some CIA analysts," and on "liberals and the far left" who "often refused to look at the evidence" for Soviet-supported terrorist activity. "The Soviets and their terrorist surrogates admit that they support terrorism; they simply do not call it by that name," East said. "The Soviets describe many of the terrorist movements that they support as 'national liberation movements' and regard them as 'progressive.'"

"Unfortunately, some who have been critical of the Administration's counter-terrorist policy have failed to understand this trick of language," he said.



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