

Danville Co-op Agronomy Newsletter, Sept. 09

In preparation for writing this month's installment of the newsletter, my thoughts go back to what went on with the 09' wheat crop. The first thought was how we started out with the Sept. 10 rain event that not only washed away a lot of topsoil, but also washed away bunches of nitrogen that had already been applied, not to mention all the weed seeds that it displaced and moved downstream. The second thought could have been the weed seeds that were displaced, Wow, how much cheat and rye could that event move (I'm new to the area) and how much of it is the result of poor control measures from the past? Well, the answer to that question could be multi-faceted. Yes, rye or cheat seed that had been buried up until the rain event could have been uncovered, and without a doubt have washed in from another field. However, it is my guess that these issues have been hard to control for many years in a "continuous wheat" cultural program.

Is help on the way? Well, yes if the problem isn't too bad and you are successful in the weather department for utilizing new chemistry properly. The chemicals used to fix cheat and rye problems in continuous wheat are getting better but rely on the weather and growth cycles to get the optimum performance. Of course the best way to rid your fields of these pesky weeds is breaking the cycle of growth with rotation.

The first stage in growing a rotational crop is the planning program. What species of weed is the most problematic in your over-all control program? Is it a grass or a broadleaf weed? Is it an annual or a perennial? What is its life cycle? Is it easier to control in a "grass crop" or a "broadleaf crop"? Can it be controlled with a contact chemical or will it be controlled easier with a residual herbicide based on its life cycle? How many rotations will be needed to culturally control the pest?

Some of the control measures start with a well-timed application of a burn-down plus a little atrazine in the fall of the year. Let us at the co-op know of your plans and we will help you in your decisions to plan your weed control. Thanks for your business!

