Danville Co-op Agronomy News – Aug. 2010

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I feel like I must say something more about breaking a weed cycle in our cropping programs. More producers are turning their attention to rotation to rid their fields of unwanted weed problems such as cheat and rye, pigweeds and crabgrass. This concern is very valid in south central Kansas because of the volume of continuous wheat production in the past and the way we have managed our rotations. With the exception of those producers that plow after wheat harvest, we have allowed some of our more problematic weeds to go unchecked thus creating a problem for our subsequent rotational crop. Case in point, here at the end of July we have been asked to spray pigweeds that are seeding and crabgrass that is mature and seeding in fields that are going to full-season soybeans next spring. I know the price of control is not cheap and a producer needs to be careful how much money he ties up in inputs, however the seeds he has produced will be there to germinate in the spring and the weed pressure in the soybeans will be increased to put pressure as well on the weed control in the soybeans. If a pigweed is allowed to grow to maturity, it will produce approximately one million seeds. If your pre-emerge weed control program does control 98% of those seedlings (no control is 100%), then how many seedlings are left to control? The answer is 20,000 seeds. That number would justify a subsequent post-applied application at best.

In our area, rye and cheat problems have been detrimental for **every** wheat producer. The volume of cheat and rye renders everyone's wheat undesirable to the market. When the supply pipeline backs up, customers can pick and choose the wheat that they would like to have both in quantity and quality. When we go to the grocery store, we don't take home the small bruised apples because some Washington State apple producer needs to move his product. Some of us need to consider both graze-out wheat and rotation to a spring planted crop, along with a good control program as a solution to this very real problem. A very successful farmer once told me, that to have a good weed control program was to "spray early and spray often". Thanks for lending an ear! Ron Kenney