



## ***THE WEED PATCH***

### **Sugarcane Planting: Follow up Herbicide Application and Salvage Situations**

**Jim Griffin**

The rain in many areas has slowed planting operations and some fields that were clean and ready to plant now have a flush of new weed growth. Glyphosate products would be an excellent choice for bermudagrass control but 7 days should be allowed for herbicide to be taken into the plant and moved to underground rhizomes. In situations where a quick kill is desired Gramoxone Inteon can be applied to desiccate above ground plant material. Because Gramoxone Inteon is a contact herbicide, expect regrowth of large grass and broadleaf weeds if planting is further delayed.

Most growers have decided by now what herbicide program to use at planting. Regardless of the program, weed control for around 60 days can be expected. For bermudagrass, johnsongrass, and itchgrass a split application program with herbicide applied at planting and around 60 days later will be more effective than a single at-planting application. For bermudagrass, a good follow up program would be Sencor/Metri DF at 1.5 lb/A. If your concern is winter weeds, atrazine or Sencor/Metri DF would be a good choice. In many cases where split application programs are used, beds in the spring are essentially free of winter weeds. The cost of a fall application of herbicide to control winter weeds may more than offset the cost of herbicide to control winter weeds in the spring. Having a clean weed free seedbed in the spring would promote faster drying of row beds and middles, earlier sugarcane emergence, and more efficient tillage and application of banded spring herbicides.

When rainfall is not received for activation of herbicides applied at planting or when herbicide is not applied because of unexpected problems, fields can be overrun with weeds creating a salvage situation. Sugarcane seedlings are struggling to compete with a mix of grass and broadleaf weeds and if weeds are not removed stand loss is a real possibility. There are several herbicides options but most can be very expensive. The goal at this point is to remove weed competition and provide residual weed control from that point forward. Gramoxone Inteon is labeled for use as a burndown treatment in sugarcane up to 4-leaf and cost wise, is a very good choice in this situation. Often another herbicide is applied with Gramoxone to provide residual weed control. In my experience growers are reluctant to pull the trigger and apply Gramoxone Inteon knowing that injury to sugarcane will occur. Injury, however, is temporary and within days seedling are regrowing. Growers have been pleased with the results.

Hopefully this article has provided food for thought. A meeting with your county agent, consultant, or crop advisor may help to develop or to fine tune a weed control program specific to your needs.

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