

All Crops, November 2, 2001

**GOOD WEEDS = GOOD CROPS**

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A general analysis of the 2001 Southeast Missouri crop year might be "weedy". Fortunately, the old adage that "good weeds equals good crops" was generally true. The normal mechanism is that good rainfall stimulates crop growth while at the same time wearing on herbicides, stimulating weed germination and also helping weeds to grow.

However, the summer was more dry than wet. Unfortunately, irrigation acts just like rain when it comes to stimulating weeds- in fact furrow irrigation is worse. Water running down row middles wears out residual herbicides and stimulates weeds germination.

However it isn't just wetness that favors weeds- our dry weather added plenty of insult. Very few preemergence herbicides were activated this year. Command on rice was not stellar because it was poorly activated. Preemergence herbicides on corn, cotton, and soybeans were not activated either.

Then during the time of postemergence spraying, weeds were drought stressed and weren't controlled- again this seemed to apply to all crops. It is best to spray immediately after irrigation; however, that advice is a lot easier to give than to follow..

The results in our test plots indicate that we might have been a little too hard on Roundup and it's response to water stress in past years. It is always best to have good growing conditions and Roundup will eventually fail when weeds are stressed; however, this year, when the majority of our traditional soybean herbicides failed because of dry weather, Roundup was head-and-shoulders better. Again, don't take this as an endorsement for spraying when there is stress with Roundup. Roundup has bent a lot traditional of rules- but I don't think it's broken any of them.

Before we leave the topic of Roundup and drought stress- there seemed to be a lot of coffeeshop talk that Roundup UltraMax was weaker than last year's Roundup Ultra. Our UltraMax test plots looked a lot worse than Roundup Ultra plots in previous years- BUT, so did our Roundup Ultra, our Touchdown IQ and about 14 other flavors of glyphosate. Roundup Ultra and Roundup UltraMax gave equal weed control. Everything was off this year. In fact, to get a really clean bean crop, we had to spray Roundup three times.