NATIONAL HERBICIDE RESISTANCE EXTENSION PROGRAM

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Throughout the cropping regions of Australia both the number of species of herbicide resistant weeds and the area affected have been increasing. Despite a greater understanding of the cause of herbicide resistance very few growers, unless actually faced with resistant weeds, were found to change their cropping practices to prevent the problem from occurring. The aim of the project was to increase the adoption of management strategies that minimise the risk of developing herbicide resistant weed populations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 1992, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) across three areas: 1) Northern NSW/Queensland, 2) Southern NSW/South Australia/Tasmania/Victoria and 3) Western Australia

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reason for the poor adoption by farmers of herbicide resistance management strategies was due to a combination of factors including: 1) growers having a poor understanding of the cause of the problem, 2) growers having to deal with complex and difficult messages and concepts, 3) a lack of clear and consistent messages, 4) control strategies that conflict with other management issues, 5) other management issues are a higher priority, 6) the misconception that herbicide resistance only occurs in ryegrass, 7) the *head in the sand* approach taken by growers that had not developed the problem and 8) potential short term economic losses.

These barriers are being overcome by the development of an extension strategy that focused on: 1) national standardisation of herbicide groups, 2) production of extension material with simple and consistent messages, 3) integrating herbicide resistance management strategies into existing extension and educational programs such as TOPCROP, general weed management activities and chemical user training courses and 4) providing technical support and training to industry advisers, re-sellers and farmer groups.

The project has had considerable success with most growers now aware of herbicide resistance and many growers, particularly in districts where the problem has occurred, adopting strategies that minimise the risk of developing resistant weed populations. The project has also resulted in the development of a national standard for herbicide groups with the agro-chemical industry. By the end of 1995, all herbicide containers will identify the herbicide group the product belongs to.

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