

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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New Farming Practices Favor Ragweed

As farm producers have moved to less tillage to reduce soil erosion, conserve moisture and cut costs, they are confronted with different problems. Reduced tillage or no-till practices have reduced some weed problems but also are preferences for new weeds.

One of these weeds is common ragweed. As a 4-H member many years ago, I remember having to learn how to identify it in crop judging contests. So, it has been present in North Dakota for many years. It seems to have a preference for undisturbed seedbeds plus it does well in low-fertility sites and soil sites that easily stress plants.

Common ragweed has been receiving special attention in the Midwest farm community because of resistance some biotypes have developed to herbicides. As we continue to use less tillage it is likely we will experience higher populations of common ragweed and thus some resistance to cost effective herbicides.

Until recently I did not know common ragweed is native throughout North America. No-till farming practices are just what the seed like. Ragweed seed germinates on or very near the soil surface. Seed laying deep in the soil profile need tillage to bring them to the soil surface to induce germination. Research has shown that a combination of light and temperature are involved in the germination process. According to university scientists, the seed of different common ragweed biotypes can respond differently to day length and temperatures depending on their latitude of origin. It is interesting to note that seeds from northern latitude biotypes tend to germinate and emerge earlier than those from southern latitudes. Plants which emerge mid-April through May can produce up to three times the seeds and biomasses plants that germinate in mid to late June. These same

scientists report common ragweed plants allowed to grow for the entire growing season can produce 32,000 to 62,000 seeds per plant.

Like many other weed species, common ragweed will not reduce yields when the crop can grow under weed free conditions for two to four weeks after emergence. However, when common ragweed emerges with the crop, yield can be reduced substantially.

For pre-plant control, it is strongly recommended to combine two herbicides with different modes of action. This could be a combination 2,4-D and glyphosate. For post emergent herbicide applications, the most effective control practice is to apply the herbicide before the ragweed plants exceed 4 to 6 inches tall.

Local Durum Grower Recognized

It is natural for the wheat growers of North Dakota to expound on the quality of the product they produce. But just how good is it? That is one of the tasks the North Dakota Wheat Commission tries to answer through its annual quality survey and a special contest. Recently the Commission announced the winners of the Wheat Performance Contest. On that list was Floyd Miller, Williston. Floyd submitted a sample of Mountrail which placed 5th overall. The submitted samples were scored on a kernel weight, semolina extraction, semolina ash, mikograph, gluten, pasta color, and firmness and cooking loss. Keep up the good work Floyd. It is nice the industry has folks like you making sure the quality of our wheat is documented.

The top sample was of the variety Alzada while 3 separate samples of Divide placed 2nd, 3rd, and 9th. DG Star, Strongfield and Alkabo were also represented in the top ten.