



MINIMIZING WEED SEED TRANSFER AT HARVEST

What You'll Learn...

- Weather conditions and challenges with weed control during a growing season may leave some fields weedy at harvest.
- Simple steps, such as harvesting weedy fields last and carefully cleaning harvest equipment between fields, can help minimize the spread of weeds, including herbicide-resistant biotypes.

Less than ideal weather conditions can lead to untimely herbicide applications resulting in higher than normal weed densities at harvest. Fall harvest is an important time to evaluate weed management programs. Always note the location of problematic weeds and take steps to minimize the transfer of weed seeds. Harvest equipment can greatly contribute to the spread of weed seeds across fields. Having a plan in place prior to harvest can potentially help minimize the spread of hard-to-control weeds.



Figure 1. Weeds present in soybeans at harvest.

Locate Weedy Fields Prior to Harvest

When possible, harvest weedy fields and dense weedy areas of fields last. Harvesting these fields last can help minimize the transfer of weed seed to weed-free areas. Weeds may also interfere with harvest because they often do not dry down with the crop and may clog harvesting equipment.

Clean Harvest Machinery

Weed seed can be dispersed between fields by all harvesting equipment. Prior to the first harvest, thoroughly clean all equipment including combines,

tractors, trucks, augers, and tarps. Be sure to reverse and clean augers. In addition, harvesting equipment should be cleaned prior to moving to another field to help minimize the spread of weed seed. Weed seed can also be spread over large areas from soil that sticks to tractor and combine tires. The most common and efficient methods of cleaning equipment include vacuuming, sweeping, and using compressed air or water.

The best way to prevent and protect your farm from weeds dispersed by harvesting equipment is to implement an effective weed management program. The location of weedy areas should be documented at harvest to help develop a weed management plan for the following season. The plan should include strategies to identify problematic fields and develop cleaning procedures for all harvesting equipment.



Figure 2. When possible, harvest weedy fields and dense weedy areas of fields last.

By implementing and following this type of program, the potential for mechanical spread of weeds will be reduced.

Sources:

Bagavathiannan, M.V., Norsworthy, J.K., Scott, R.C., and Barber, T.L. The spread of herbicide resistant weeds: What should growers know? University of Arkansas Extension. FSA2171. <http://www.uaex.edu>. Menalled, F. 2014. Crop harvesting and weed management. Montana IPM Bulletin. Montana State University Extension. <http://pesticides.montana.edu>. Web sources verified 7/12/2017.

Individual results may vary, and performance may vary from location to location and from year to year. This result may not be an indicator of results you may obtain as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible.

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