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Canada Thistle: Planning for 1994

Leon Wrage
South Dakota State University

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by Leon Wrage, Extension Weed Specialist

Advanced planning can provide a more effective control program where Canada thistle control was less than adequate during 1993. Infestations that were not controlled last year will have more vigorous, heavy growth as a result from extra food reserves. The heavy 1993 seed crop is potential for spread and new infestations. Here are suggested management options important for next year:

1. **CROP SELECTION.** Small grain and annual forages, or alfalfa work well in a control program. These crops offer opportunity for tillage/herbicides before or after harvest and give competition during the season. Winter wheat or rye are effective options.

2. **HERBICIDE PROGRAM.** Plan to use full rates in the crop, especially for early season treatments if temperatures are low. Low rate 2,4-D or Banvel treatments may not hold. Be certain the crop has an effective herbicide to keep the weed in check; some row crops have very limited options.

3. **SEEDLING CONTROL.** Be certain the plan includes seedling control, either tillage or herbicide. Research shows 2,4-D at .5 lb/A will prevent reinfestation from seed. Some soil applied herbicides (such as triazines) also control seedlings.

4. **NO-TILL BURNDOWN.** Test data indicate better than expected. Canada thistle control from "burndown" herbicides applied before planting later seeded crops such as soybeans. Roundup and 2,4-D were effective products in these tests. These are less effective if fields were late fall or spring tilled.

5. **SET-UP for FALL.** Fall herbicide treatments are usually more effective than when applied in the spring. Mowing at early bud or early tillage in fallow usually produces good fall regrowth. Using a contact herbicide (Gramoxone or Cyclone) after grain harvest controls several weeds and provides a good opportunity for regrowth than can be treated later.

6. **SPOT EQUIPMENT.** Small, portable units that can treat patches in fields, along fence rows, and in unmanaged areas is almost essential for timely treatment of small patches. Units for ATV's or that utilize a pickup or tractor electric source are relatively low cost.

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