



By: Anita Speers

The War on Weeds – What’s in Your Battle Plan?



Figure 1 – Canada fleabane that has bolted. Given such a wet spring, weeds are further developed which means more effective modes of action need to be in your tank this year for clean fields.

Resistance management and using multiple modes of effective action (MMOEA) – these topics aren’t new by any means, but 2019 is proving to many producers across the province **why** they are such important topics. Prolonged rain events have kept many people out of the field and yet the weeds continue to grow... and grow.. and grow some more. This year, having a strong herbicide program **AND** a high water volume (20 gals!) to take down already emerged weeds will be key for waging the war on weeds in your field.

Not all herbicides act in the same way, so having an understanding about the expectation of each mode of action in your tank is vital for clean fields. Consider the products available for your soybean crop. Active ingredients (AI) like Dicamba (found in Engenia, FeXapan and Xtendimax) offer “knockdown” activity – this means the product is effective on weeds already emerged. Metribuzin (the AI of Sencor) and Imazethapyr (AI of Pursuit) work for weeds that have not yet emerged; products like these offer you “residual” weed control. Designing an effective spray program should involve both knockdown and residual products for season long clean fields.

Now that you have the chemistry side of your battle plan determined, it’s time to fill the sprayer and cover some acres! While it might mean an extra fill up or two, by having higher water volumes the plant canopy can be covered more easily and thoroughly – this is especially important given the size of weeds present across Lambton and Middlesex county fields this spring.

Late Planted Soybeans

With delayed corn planting and questions surrounding hybrid selection, many producers find themselves wondering the same thing about their soybean selection. Is it time to change out your soybean selection? The short answer, no.

Soybeans are a unique crop because they are photosensitive, which means they are sensitive to daylength. This means that regardless of their planting date, soybeans will flower around the same time each year. By planting soybeans later than expected, the plant devotes less time to vegetative growth which makes for a shorter plant height.

Given a later planting date, there are a few planting adjustments that should be considered. Increasing your seeding rate by about 10% promotes faster canopy closure and will make soybeans taller because of plant competition. By keeping soybeans on narrower rows (15” or less), canopy closure occurs faster which is your cheapest form of weed control. The faster your crop canopy can close, the less sunlight and resources can be given to growing weeds.



Figure 2: left, 15” row soybeans and right, 30” row soybeans. Canopy closure is faster given soybeans planted on narrower rows.