

**WEED MANAGEMENT: TRANSGENICS  
AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES  
-A CONSULTANT'S PERSPECTIVE  
William M. McLawhorn, Jr.  
McLawhorn Crop Services, Inc.  
Cove City, NC**

**Introduction**

You are going to hear from a number of sources why growers should totally embrace the Roundup Ready and BXN (if available) technologies at this time. I, too, am extremely excited about these new tools, but I also think there are circumstances where we need to slow down and evaluate more thoroughly before making wholesale changes in our current operations.

**Discussion**

Like most consultants, I make a living helping growers allocate resources in an effort to keep their operations well managed, from an environmental standpoint, and to keep them profitable.

Historically, that has meant being an early adapter of new technology, sorting out when and in what specific situations the technology fits. But in the past couple of years, it has often meant advocating slowing down the rate of change, or telling people what they don't want to hear.

In a highly competitive corporate environment, new technologies are often sold to growers before adequate applied research is done to figure out where they fit. There is no better example of this than with many of our transgenic varieties.

In the past, growers have rarely made huge swings in their variety choices without one or two years personal experience, as well as a couple of years or so in official variety tests. Yet this year, orders were being placed for brand new Roundup Ready varieties before the 1997 crop was harvested.

In looking back at 1997 and our personal experiences with Staple, BXN, and Roundup Ready technologies, weed control performed well in all cases, as expected.

As long as the herbicides were properly timed, and the weed spectrum matched the situation, any of these systems performed well. With BXN, we generally incorporated a DNA and sometimes used a pre-emergence herbicide and sometimes we didn't. This was followed by one to two applications of Buctril, followed by a late directed application of a residual herbicide.

With Roundup Ready varieties, we had various combinations with and without pre's and ppi herbicides. In general, we applied two applications of Roundup when nothing was applied up front. Where we used the pre's and ppi's we generally replaced our first directed application with Roundup over the top, and followed it with a late directed application of a residual material.

As expected, we did not get adequate control of dayflower with the Roundup system, and I've been told that there is nothing that will control Florida pusley, post emergence.

So, regardless of what you do, in planning for 1998, you still need to consider the weed spectrum of the individual fields, among other considerations.

Among other economic considerations, I believe the opportunity costs are enormous with these systems. The possible time savings and simplicity of applications could have an enormous impact on your bottom line, as long as productivity is maintained.

**Summary**

Growers just need to keep in mind that transgenics are not the same variety as the recombinant parent, and most of us have made incorrect assumptions about varieties in the past when our information was based on limited data.

The future of Roundup Ready technology is incredibly exciting, but for 1998, it will take a huge leap of faith for growers to bet the farm on varieties that they have little familiarity with.