



MEDIA RELEASE

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Vineyards in the firing line for some tough weed management decisions

The escalating battle against glyphosate resistance in weeds is moving to Australian vineyards, with official figures already recording 21 vineyards with glyphosate resistant annual ryegrass populations in South Australia and Western Australia.

Broadacre agriculture has experienced significant increases in weed populations developing resistance to glyphosate in the past few years, and now vineyard managers are being urged to act in response to the emerging problem.

Authorities say an over-reliance on glyphosate for under-vine control of weeds is what is pushing this explosion in glyphosate resistance. Glyphosate is easy to use and relatively cost effective so it is the herbicide of first choice.

"No other herbicide has the same characteristics or broad weed control spectrum of glyphosate and we need to look after it," stated Associate Professor Chris Preston, chair of the Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group.

"The other thing that growers need to note is that there is nothing coming down the pipe-line to replace glyphosate, so they need to start thinking about how they will operate without it, if it comes to that."

Knockdown herbicide options are limited with glyphosate, paraquat, glufosinate and amitrole being registered, so the loss of one of these through herbicide resistance severely complicates weed management.

Prof Preston knows that glyphosate resistance is not a certainty as long as growers are pro-active in their weed management and start to use a range of weed control practices before glyphosate resistance either develops, or is introduced onto their farm.

"Growers need to move past denial and start mixing up their weed control by combining herbicides with non-herbicide techniques such as cultivation or mulching," he said. "Stopping any survivors of the herbicide application from setting seed is the cornerstone of herbicide resistance management."

Vineyard managers need to be out in the field now looking for patches of weeds that weren't controlled by the herbicide. Plants can be sent away for testing to confirm whether glyphosate resistance is the cause, however all surviving plants must be prevented from setting seed.

In Australia, glyphosate resistance has developed in annual ryegrass, awnless barnyard grass, liverseed grass, flaxleaf fleabane and windmill grass. Worldwide there are 22 species of weeds with populations resistant to glyphosate.

What makes this issue even more worrying for vineyard managers is that annual ryegrass in South Australia has recently been confirmed resistant to paraquat, making a total of 7 species with paraquat resistance in Australia and another 19 species overseas.

"We now have one population of ryegrass resistant to both glyphosate and paraquat," said Prof Preston. "This will make weed control very difficult for this grower," he added

Growers who suspect glyphosate resistant weeds on their property should contact their relevant state expert. Details of who to contact in each state are available from the Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group website

<http://www.glyphosateresistance.org.au/suspect%20glyphosate.htm>

The Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group is supported by the Grains Research & Development Corporation, and key R&D-based crop protection companies with an interest in the sustainability of glyphosate.

The group's website has a range of information about glyphosate resistance including a register of glyphosate resistant weed populations and guides and links for management of glyphosate resistance in different crops and management situations.

Ends

Caption: Glyphosate resistant annual ryegrass in a vineyard.

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Go to: www.glyphosateresistance.org.au for more information.