

Weedseekers a valuable tool for growers

SELECTIVE spraying units such as the commercially available Weedseeker units (Weedseekers), offer growers a cost-effective way of controlling herbicide resistant weeds and hard-to-kill summer weeds.

New research funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) in WA's north-eastern Wheatbelt will develop herbicide application protocols and mixtures for use with boomsprayers equipped with Weedseekers.

A Weedseeker is a device which uses laser technology to identify individual weeds so they can be selectively sprayed.

Crop Circle Consulting and growers in the North East Farming Futures Group are holding the on-farm trials.

Summer weed trials are being held north of Mullewa and the winter spray fallow trials are being held at Tenindewa.

Crop Circle Consulting director and agronomist Grant Thompson said the research would expand growers' weed control options using Weedseekers.

"These trials are an opportunity to use novel

herbicide mixtures over very small areas of the paddock to control resistant weed populations and hard-to-kill weeds," he said.

"The herbicide costs using weedseekers are a fraction of conventional weed control costs, non-selective herbicides can be used and there is a hugely reduced pesticide loading on the environment."

Mr Thompson said some farmers in the region were already using Weedseekers on their farms but the technology was not yet mainstream.

He said Weedseeker technology was suitable for any situation with sparsely distributed summer weeds, or for use at maximum label rates in fallowed paddocks to control herbicide-resistant weeds.

Mr Thompson said Weedseekers would be a valuable tool in minimising the development of glyphosate-resistant weeds now that glyphosate-tolerant canola was available to WA growers.

"Glyphosate-tolerant ryegrass populations already exist in this region," he said. "Weedseekers will allow growers to selectively spray resistant weeds with



□ A boomsprayer with a weedseeker attached being used to spot spray weeds.

knockdowns other than glyphosate."

Mr Thompson said Weedseekers could also be used to selectively spray weeds before harvesting when there is a wet finish to the season, rather than crop-topping the whole paddock."

Trial aims include:

□ Assessing current and novel herbicide mixes and rates to achieve fast summer weed control using Weedseekers.

□ Planting trial plots to wheat to assess the residual effects from herbicides applied in summer.

□ Assessing herbicide treatments applied with Weedseekers on winter weeds in a fallow scenario.

□ Identifying alternative herbicides for the control of weeds with resistance to traditional herbicides used for winter weed control in-crop and in a fallow situation.



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