

AHRI and WeedSmart Communications

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Summary ‘More crop, less weeds’ is the motive behind the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative’s (AHRI) communication strategy. We disseminate AHRI and other’s research by using a number of platforms and methods to deliver key research backed messages. The goal is to raise awareness of resistance problems as well as to deliver solutions to combat resistance in crop weeds and improve crop profitability.

Keywords Communication, social media, resistance, crop, weeds, AHRI, WeedSmart.

INTRODUCTION

The internet has changed the world. The past decade has witnessed one of the most revolutionary changes in the way humans interact with content, and there is every indication that big changes will continue into the next decade. Communication is at the heart of these changes. Today, most of us are connected whenever and wherever we go, with technology transforming how we communicate and interact with each other. The catalyst for this major shift was the internet, and the evolution of social media is the next catalyst. The way people access information, expect from, and interact with the various platforms (online, digital and social) has changed forever.

Australia’s widespread and often isolated broad acre cropping farmers, agronomists and chemical industry consultants are increasingly accessing on-line communications to source and share knowledge. AHRI’s and WeedSmart’s communication is similarly evolving to cater to the changing needs of this industry.

AHRI is a research group based at The University of WA and is focused on sustainable cropping and herbicide resistance in broad-acre farming. AHRI’s communication activities are enhanced by WeedSmart, an industry funded herbicide stewardship initiative. AHRI project manages WeedSmart on behalf of its stakeholders.

KEY AHRI COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

AHRI insight AHRI insight is a successful fortnightly industry e-newsletter targeted at growers and agronomists. It is used to extend AHRI, national and international herbicide resistance and crops and weeds research to the Australian grains industry.

Media program A media program is organised in conjunction with GRDC media representatives and science writers to extend AHRI research and relevant herbicide resistance, weed management and crop protection messages across Australia.

Science articles Science articles are organised in conjunction with GRDC media representatives and science writers for publication in GRDC Ground Cover, Australian Grain, Farming Ahead, and other rural magazines. AHRI also publishes its own articles in commercial magazines, such as Australian Grain, as well as grower group magazines (including WANTFA) and works with media to produce articles for online publication (such as Science Network WA).

Workshops Workshops are conducted at regional and national workshops in collaboration with AHRI Champion Farmers, local and eastern states based agronomists and grower groups, and WeedSmart.

KEY WEEDSMART ACTIVITIES

Media program A media program is coordinated with Australia’s research experts. This program delivers Australia wide weed and crop management research and expertise through print, radio and online media.

Champion farmers Individual growers practicing innovative weed management are recruited to deliver key messages to their regional neighbours.

Workshops In conjunction with grower groups, WeedSmart workshops deliver seasonally relevant messages based on a ‘10 Point Plan’.

Website The WeedSmart website, found at www.weedsmart.org.au, is centred on the ‘10 Point Plan’, and provides applied weed and crop management messages in an engaging format.

DISCUSSION

One message can be communicated in many different ways and in many different formats. Farmers and consultants require information to be delivered in a

format that is initially easy to understand. AHRI and WeedSmart use an approach that allows the messages to be delivered at a simple level with the option to delve further into a more detailed explanation of the research. Observational and anecdotal evidence indicate that these communication methods are having an impact on farm management.

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