

THE SUGAR BULLETIN

The mission of the American Sugar Cane League is to sustain success through effective research, positive legislation, public relations/promotion, and education.



**American
Sugar Cane
League**
EST. 1922

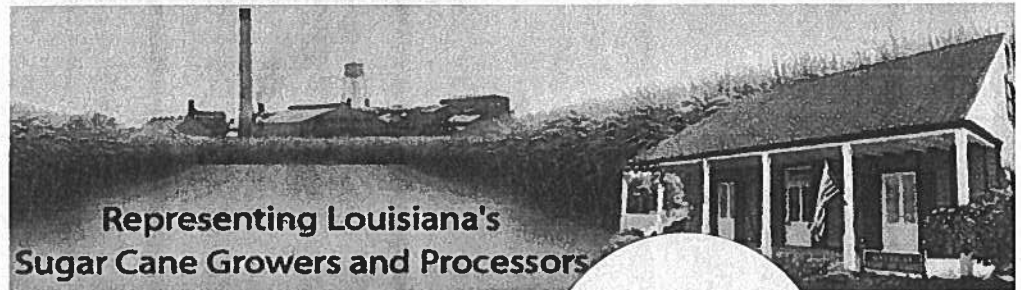
Making Life Sweeter. Naturally

March 2020

Volume 98, No. 6

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**Representing Louisiana's
Sugar Cane Growers and Processors**

herbicides utilized for fallow
 Producers can use this
 determine the requisite specific
 ons of tillage operations and
 applications which meet the
 obtaining the desired level of
 rol at the lowest cost per acre.
 al variable cost per acre value
 uel and labor charges for the
 a field as well as any material
 rbicides applied. Total variable
 each operation summed across
 herbicide application operations
 timate a total variable cost per
 specified fallow program.
 s can access the 2020 fallow
 ntrol model at: <https://www.ers.com/topics/crops/sugarcane/>

s, 2020

ser	Labor	Total
.09	\$31.88	\$199.26
9.22	--	\$133.94
2.31	\$31.88	\$333.19
.01	\$0.11	\$0.66
.06	--	\$0.45
.07	\$0.11	\$1.11

ing Cost per Acre		
	\$350	\$375
	7.8	8.4
	7.1	7.6
	6.6	7.0
	6.1	6.5
	5.7	6.1

andlord share of 61%. A 5% yield
 ing.



Deep In The Weeds

By Al Orgeron, Ph.D.
 IPM Specialist, Southeast Region
 LSU AgCenter,

The Spreading of Weeds

Weed seeds don't have feet, or do they?

Much of my recent efforts have focused on finding alternative herbicide programs to manage weeds which appear to have developed tolerance to the limited herbicides available for Louisiana sugarcane production. As I traveled to and from fields with problematic populations of weeds in Bunkie, White Castle, and St. Gabriel, I couldn't help but wonder about the potential spread of these difficult-to-control weeds into new fields, adjacent farms and into neighboring parishes.

Of course, weed seeds don't have feet, but they can spread either naturally and/or by human activities.

Some plant seeds have specialized appendages to aid in dispersion. Dandelions are a great example of plants which disperse their seed with the aid of wind and its seed can be spread for miles. Itchgrass seed are encased in a hollow seed appendage and float. A heavy rain event is just one way to spread this weed pest of cane.

Wild animals are also responsible for moving weed seeds. While weed seeds are a source of nutrition for many wild animals, studies have shown some seeds can pass through the gut intact and can be deposited in droppings, thus spreading to new areas. Seeds from plants like cockle bur and bur clover can also get tangled in animal fur and move into new areas when they become dislodged.

Humans also play a part in spreading weed seeds and weeds to new areas; most of the time unintentionally but sometimes intentionally. Itchgrass is a good example of both unintentional and intentional human dispersal of weed seed. The first reports of itchgrass was along a train track in St. Martin Parish in 1927. Its seeds were collected and intentionally planted into St. Martin pastures to provide a forage for cattle. Conversely, an additional method of spreading itchgrass around St. Martin and into the surrounding sugarcane parishes was facilitated by the moving of wooden mats which contained itchgrass seed. These mats were used to support oil field equipment and moved from area to

area when drilling and pipeline activities were completed. While this weed seed movement was an unintentional consequence of oil and gas production, it only represents one of many human activities capable of the dispersion of weed seeds.

Sugarcane farm machinery and equipment can unintentionally spread weed seed. Trucks, mowing equipment, tractors, plows, sprayers, wagons and combines all can be culprits. As farm size become larger and larger, and farming operations move into multiple parishes, and as we utilize harvest groups to expand the sugarcane industry, it is understandable to see how weeds can quickly move. Sugarcane producers and harvest groups can become overwhelmed with the many tasks necessary to prevent weed movement. The cleaning of

machinery and equipment before starting field operations prior to moving to a new farm is one method of preventing the unintentional spread of weeds; however, this is a time-consuming task, but an important step in slowing the spread of weeds.

With the large amount of farm machinery and equipment used on multiple farms throughout Louisiana, it is important to increase weed scouting activities to quickly identify and develop a management strategy for potential new weed infestations.

While there is little that can be done to address natural and wild animal weed seed dispersal, the washing of farm machinery and equipment can be an effective strategy to slow the movement of weeds into new areas.

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