



Note From the President:

What an exciting time to be in agriculture and to be a part of the Southern Weed Science Society! I am proud to be a part of such a great organization and for the privilege that you have given me to serve as your President. If you recall, “Stepping Up To the Challenge” was the theme for the 2023 SWSS meeting and with topics such as the Endangered Species Act, Remote Sensing/Machine Learning, Weed Resistance and Invasive Species, it is clearly a time for all of us to step up and be active. I would like to extend my appreciation to the over 250 members that attended the 2023 meeting as well as thank the numerous volunteers that were critical to making the meeting a success. I want to personally thank Dr. Connor Webster who chaired the local arrangements committee and put in countless hours to make sure that the meeting ran smoothly as well as helped in coordinating the local events.



I continue to be “wowed” by the SWSS undergraduate and graduate students. Not only with the outstanding oral and poster presentations, but I am just as impressed with their professionalism and leadership that is always in action. There were 87 graduate student participants in the oral paper contest and 29 in the poster contest and all were very impressive. I want to extend my appreciation to Matthew Wiggins for chairing the student contests. The SWSS Graduate Student Organization continues to be an integral part of the SWSS and their focus on personal and professional development for their members is clearly preparing them for successful careers in Weed Science. The good news is that this group is not all business all of the time and they like to have fun! The TopGolf Student Event hosted by the SWSS Endowment Foundation and several company sponsors was a great opportunity to network with their peers while showing off their golf skills (or lack of). We had over 120 students and sponsors in attendance for this event which continues to grow! We are already anticipating an even larger event for the 2024 SWSS/WSSA joint meeting in San Antonio.

Speaking of the 2024 SWSS/WSSA joint meeting, planning has already begun and the Board of Directors for both organizations are setting expectations to make it one of the most informative and exciting meetings on your calendar in 2024. The Board of Directors for each organization will be meeting virtually each month until January to develop the agenda as well as the logistics that come with a joint meeting. The program chairs for the 2024 SWSS/WSSA meeting are Todd Baughman (SWSS) and Gregory Dahl (WSSA). Please feel free to reach out to Todd, Greg or any board member with your input and suggestions. Please note that there will be a joint summer board meeting on September 5-7 at the Hyatt Regency in San Antonio where plans will be finalized for the 2024 meeting. We welcome your input and look forward to

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seeing everyone in San Antonio!

Finally, I want to thank Dr Darrin Dodds for his leadership as President of the SWSS in 2022-23. Darrin's contribution to SWSS began long before his term as President and his impact will continue to be felt well into the future. He truly wants the best for the SWSS and its members and his dedication became even more evident to me as I had the opportunity to work closely with him on the 2023 meeting. Please join me in thanking Darrin for his passion, dedication and contribution as President.

Eric Castner
2023 SWSS President



SAVE THE DATE:
WSSA/SWSS Joint Annual Meeting
January 22 - 25, 2024
Hyatt Regency San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

2023 Graduate Student Paper & Poster Contest

The 2023 SWSS student contest in Baton Rouge, LA was a very successful contest. We had a total of 87 participants (29 poster; 58 paper), so I would like to extend a big thank you to all the student participants. Additionally, I would like to extend appreciation to the 50 volunteers that dedicated their time to judging the paper and poster contests. This year's contest consisted of 8 paper sections and 4 poster sections. Below are the results of the 2023 SWSS student contest.

Pratap Devkota (pdevkota@ufl.edu) will be the committee chair in 2024.



Year	Poster Contest Participants				Oral Paper Contest Participants			Total Participants
	Under-grad	MS	PhD	Total	MS	PhD	Total	
2023	0	14	15	29	29	29	58	87
2022	3	30	13	46	25	24	49	95
2021	0	22	24	46	28	34	62	108
2020	0	13	9	22	29	26	55	77
2019	0	15	15	30	26	17	43	73

Student contest award winners included:

Posters		
M.S. Group #1	1 st - Casey Arnold	University of Arkansas
	2 nd - Maria Carolina Souza	University of Arkansas
M.S. Group #2	1 st – Noah Reed	University of Arkansas
	2 nd – Jenna Vance	University of Georgia
PhD Group #1	1 st – Pamela Carvalho-Moore	University of Arkansas
	2 nd – Annu Kumari	Auburn University
PhD Group #2	1 st – Ubaldo Torres	Texas A&M University
	2 nd – Nicholas Hurdle	University of Georgia
Paper		
M.S. Group #1	1 st – Maxwell Smith	Texas Tech University
	1 st – Colton Blankenship	North Carolina State University
M.S. Group #2	1 st – Hannah Brown	University of Florida
	2 nd - Tabata De Oliveira	Mississippi State University
M.S. Group #3	1 st - Megan Mills	Texas Tech University
	2 nd – Taylor Burrell II	Mississippi State University
M.S. Group #4	1 st - Tanner King	University of Arkansas
	2 nd – Samuel Noe	University of Arkansas
PhD Group #1	1 st – Tristen Avent	University of Arkansas
	2 nd – Eric Jones	North Carolina State University
PhD Group #2	1 st – Jake Patterson	Mississippi State University
	2 nd – Eli Russell	Virginia Tech University
PhD Group #3	1 st – John Peppers	Virginia Tech University
	2 nd – Jennifer Dudak	Oklahoma State University
PhD Group #4	1 st – Annabelle McEachin	University of Georgia
	2 nd – Kyle Russell	Texas Tech University



2023 SWSS Award Winners

2023 Outstanding Young Weed Scientist (Academia) - Charles Cahoon, North Carolina State University



Charlie Cahoon is an Associate Professor and Extension Weed Specialist in the Crop and Soil Sciences Department at North Carolina State University. Charlie was born and raised in the blacklands of eastern North Carolina (Swan Quarter) where he worked on his family's row crop, vegetable, and hog farm. Charlie attended Mattamuskeet High School where he was an active member of FFA, 4-H, and lettered in baseball and football. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from North Carolina State University with a BS in Agronomy-Soil Science in 2011. While still an undergraduate, Charlie stumbled into a summer job working for the legendary Extension Weed Specialist, Dr. Alan York. Following that summer, Charlie knew he had found his calling and commenced his graduate education in Weed Science under the direction of Drs. York and David Jordan. He received his PhD in 2015 and later that year began his career as an Extension Weed Specialist at Virginia Tech. Based at the Eastern Shore AREC in Painter, Virginia, Charlie had sole responsibilities for weed management in cotton, peanuts, and vegetables and split grain responsibilities with Dr. Michael Flessner. In 2018, Charlie was fortunate to replace his mentor at North Carolina State University as the Extension Weed Specialist for corn and cotton.

In addition to his extension and research duties, Charlie teaches a cross-listed undergraduate/graduate introductory Weed Science course and guest lectures in various other classes. Charlie has authored or co-authored 34 peer-reviewed papers, 39 peer-reviewed extension publications, and 74 meeting abstracts. He has mentored 7 MS and 1 PhD students and served as a committee member for 14 additional students.

Charlie has served on several Southern Weed Science Society, Northeastern Weed Science Society, and Weed Science Society of America committees. In service to the Southern Weed Science Society, Charlie serves annually as a judge or moderator for the graduate student oral contest. From 2017 to 2019, Charlie served on the Southern Weed Science Society Student Contest Committee that culminated as committee chair for the 2019 annual meeting in Oklahoma City. As chair of the committee, Charlie organized the 2019 Graduate Student Contest that included 72 participants and 45 judges across nine separate contest sections. He has also chaired the Outstanding Educator Subcommittee and has been a member of the Continuing Education Unit Committee. Additionally, Charlie currently serves as Vice President of the Weed Science Society of North Carolina and is an active member of the Crop Protection Association of NC, Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers, and the NC Association of County Agricultural Agents. Charlie is a Deacon at Wendell Baptist Church where he also serves on the Administrative Team, Security Team, and is a substitute Sunday school and Royal Ambassador teacher. In his spare time, he enjoys tinkering on his 1962 John Deere 1010 tractor, traveling, farming/gardening, hunting/fishing, reading, playing cards, cheering on the Wolfpack (and Hokies), and spending time with his wife, two children, and yellow lab.

2023 Outstanding Educator Award - Darrin Dodds, Mississippi State University



Darrin Dodds was born and raised in Illinois and received a B.S. degree in Agriculture from Western Illinois University in 1999; a M.S. degree in Agriculture and Life Sciences (Weed Science) at Purdue University in 2002; and Ph.D. in Agriculture and Life Sciences (Weed Science) at Mississippi State University in 2007.

Darrin joined the faculty at Mississippi State University in June 2007 as an Assistant Extension Professor/Extension Cotton Specialist. He was promoted to Associate Extension/Research Professor in 2013 and Extension/Research Professor in 2018. Dr. Dodds was appointed Head of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at Mississippi State University in April 2019.

Darrin has graduated 11 M.S. and 5 Ph.D. students and currently has 6 M.S. students and 5 Ph.D. students under his direction. He has served on an additional 32 graduate student committees. His current and former students have won over 58 oral or poster presentation awards. Darrin has authored or co-authored 79 refereed manuscripts, 2 book chapters, 63 extension publications, and 300+ published abstracts. Grants and contracts as principal investigator or co-principal investigator total over \$9.2 M.

Darrin has taught Herbicide Technology for the past three years at Mississippi State University which focuses on herbicide mode of action and calibration. He has previously taught Remote Sensing Seminar; Pesticide Screening; and Resistance Management at Mississippi State University.

Darrin serves annually as a student contest judge at the Beltwide Cotton Conference, the Southern Weed Science Society, the Weed Science Society of America. In addition, Darrin has served as student presentation contest committee chair or co-chair four times for the Southern Weed Science Society and three times for the Weed Science Society of America. He was the first chair of the WSSA student presentation contest and helped author the contest rules and scoresheet. Darrin has served as contest chair for the WSSA on two occasions for five years, and as a co-chair for three additional years. He has also served as the chairperson for the SWSS summer weed contest and is a past president of the Endowment Foundation for the SWSS. Darrin has served on the SWSS and WSSA board of directors as the SWSS representative to the WSSA as well as secretary on the WSSA board of directors. Darrin currently serves as President of the Southern Weed Science Society.

Outstanding Graduate Student Award (MS) - Tristen Avent, University of Arkansas



Tristen Heath Avent of Somerville, TN, graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Tennessee-Martin in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture. His master's research at the University of Arkansas evaluated a herbicide safener seed treatment to mitigate rice injury caused by acetochlor. He successfully defended his master's thesis, "Evaluation of Fenclorim Safener for Use in Rice with Group 15 Herbicides," and graduated in May 2022.

He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. under the direction of Dr. Jason Norsworthy. His Ph.D. research will focus on optimizing John Deere's Green-on-Green See and Spray technology, which will reduce herbicide inputs with precision applications of pesticides. While attending the U of A, he has placed in 9 of 10 speaking or poster contests at professional conferences. He has been awarded the Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Science's Outstanding M.S. Student Award and the Bumpers College Distinguished Scholar Masters Award.

Tristen has also been a member of the Southern Weed Science Society since 2020 and a member of the University of Arkansas weed team for the past two years placing 8th and 1st in the individual contest, respectively. To date, Tristen has submitted three articles for publication. Upon completing his Ph.D., he intends to return to academia or industry to conduct research and bring forward new technologies and recommendations for producers across the U.S.

Outstanding Graduate Student Award (PhD) - Taylor Randell-Singleton, University of Georgia



Taylor was raised in Wellborn, FL, where her family grew vegetables, corn, hay, and cattle. As a fifth-generation agriculturalist, agriculture has always been and continues to be a huge part of her life. Growing up, Taylor was actively involved in all aspects of her family's farm, which helped develop her love of plants, and influenced her decision to study agriculture. She graduated from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, GA with a B.S. in Agriculture in 2017, and continued to the University of Georgia, where she received her M.S. in Crop and Soil Science under the advisement of Dr. Stanley Culpepper in 2019. Taylor began her Ph.D. program at the University of Georgia in 2020, continuing under the direction of Dr. Culpepper, where her dissertation research focuses on quantifying PPO-herbicide resistance in Palmer amaranth, vegetable tolerance to numerous herbicides, selection pressure following herbicide applications to Palmer amaranth in cotton, herbicide integration into cover crop use, and also involves cooperating with Regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to map and protect endangered species in Georgia.

During her time at UGA, Taylor has authored or co-authored 12 peer-reviewed publications with 5 more expected from her dissertation research, and completed her Ph.D. coursework with a 4.0 GPA. Additionally, she has authored or co-authored 10 extension publications, 33 abstracts from scientific presentations, and has given 10 invited presentations and 7 extension talks. Taylor received the University of Georgia Gary A. Herzog Fellowship for Applied Research in Cotton Agroecosystems, which funded her Master's research from 2017-2019, and served as one of the WSSA Science Policy Fellows during 2022. She is a member of the Southern Weed Science Society, Weed Science Society of America, and Beltwide Cotton Conference, has received 13 awards for graduate student presentations, two scholarships, serves as a graduate student member on three WSSA committees, and has enjoyed participating in the graduate student organizations and weed team competitions. Taylor is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the SWSS, and for the opportunities it provides for graduate students to grow as scientists.

Fellow Award - Larry Steckel, University of Tennessee



Dr. Larry Steckel is currently a Professor in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Tennessee. Larry was raised on a small family farm near Carrollton, Illinois. He received his B.S. in Agronomy in 1987 from Western Illinois University and his M.S. in Weed Science from the University of Missouri in 1989. Larry then joined Pioneer Hi Bred Int'l. where he worked for 10 years as an Agronomist. He left Pioneer to pursue a Ph.D. in the spring of 2000 and received his doctorate in 2003 from the University of Illinois under the direction of Dr. Christy Sprague.

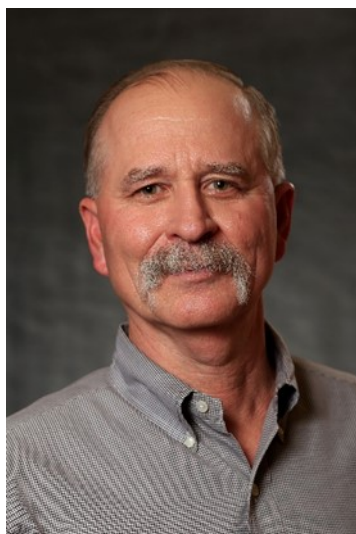
Larry joined the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Tennessee in 2003 where he holds a weed science extension (75%) and research (25%) appointment. Dr. Steckel maintains an extensive applied research program in row crops that focuses on the biology and management of three troublesome multiple herbicide-resistant weeds, Palmer amaranth, junglerice, and horseweed. These three weeds cause Tennessee growers the most management challenges and is where the majority of his program efforts are directed.

His research program has been recognized by numerous awards including the National Conservation System Cotton and Rice Conference with the Conservation System Cotton Researcher of the Year award, the University of Tennessee Ag Research Impact award, the Award of Excellence – Outstanding Paper award in 2017 and 2018 for manuscripts in Weed Technology as well as the Superior Paper Award for a manuscript in the American Society of Agriculture and Biological Engineers in 2018. He has authored or co-authored over 100 refereed journal articles and has been the associate editor of over 90 Weed Technology journal articles.

Larry considers it a great honor to have mentored three Master's Students and six Ph.D. students to completion of their degrees. Seeing these students develop has been one of the two most rewarding aspects of his career. He is very proud of the many accomplishments of his former grad students and believes this group of young pest management scientists is having, and will continue to have, very positive impacts on advancing agriculture as their careers mature.

The other most rewarding aspect of Larry's career has been helping farmers, consultants and county agents navigate challenging weed management problems. He enjoys talking with these folks whether in the field, at Extension meetings or over the phone. Larry's Extension program has been recognized by the WSSA Extension Award in 2015 and more recently by the SWSS 2019 Outstanding Educator Award and by the SWSS 2021 Excellence in Regulatory Stewardship Award. It's very satisfying when a solution to a grower problem can be found, and he feels that it's an honor to be a part of this process.

Fellow Award - Gary Schwarzlose, Bayer CropScience



Gary Schwarzlose, a Texan by birth, is a Principal Field Agronomist with Bayer Research and Development. He received his B.S. in Agronomy (1983) and his Master's of Ag in Agricultural Chemistry (1984), both from Texas A&M University.

Following graduation, Gary and his family moved to Leland, MS to work at the American Hoechst research farm. During his 38+ years in the industry, he has worked for Stauffer Chemical, American Hoechst, Hoechst-Roussel Agri-Vet, AgrEvo, Aventis, and Bayer CropScience. His job responsibilities have included Assistant Research Biologist, Herbicide Specialist, Field Development Rep, Technical Service Rep, Sales Rep, Principal Scientist, and now Principal Field Agronomist. His territories have included states from New Mexico to Alabama. In 1992, he moved back to Texas and is there to stay.

His current job responsibilities are to evaluate early phase product chemistry in various cropping systems throughout his territory. Trial disciplines include herbicide, insecticide, fungicide, and seed growth products. He is frequently involved with the evaluation and improvement of Bayer CropScience Field Solutions' business activities. He helps develop, evaluate, and maintain upcoming hardware and software as it relates to current and future business models. Gary serves as the North America lead for a Bayer CropScience team which evaluates new software and trains users on the use of these programs for trial and data management.

He is a Past-President of both the Texas Plant Protection Association (TPPA) and the American Peanut Research and Education Society (APRES).

Gary has been an active member of the Southern Weed Science Society and the Weed Science Society of America, serving on numerous committees in both societies over the years. In the Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS) in addition to his SWSS Board of Director's responsibilities, he has chaired the Local Arrangements Committee, the Site Selection Committee, and the SWSS Endowment Foundation Committee.

Gary has received several awards, including being named a 2021 APRES Fellow and a 2021 Special Achievement Award from the West Texas Agricultural Institutes. He was recognized by the TPPA with an Industry Award, the Ray Smith Leadership Award, and the 2022 TPPA Norman Borlaug Lifetime Achievement Award

Updates Corner

SWSS Endowment Enrichment Scholarship

Each year, the SWSS Endowment Foundation provides opportunities for three students at the graduate or undergraduate level to enhance their academic experience. This unique opportunity is the SWSS Endowment Enrichment Scholarship where students spend a week-long educational experience during their degree program with an academic or industry host. Each host provides the student with an informational and experiential immersion into their area of expertise. Hosts include a wide range of academic experiences ranging from extension and field based trial research, to genomic and molecular aspects of weed biology and herbicide resistance. Agronomic crops are the primary focus but experiences in turf, vegetable, invasive species management and AI technologies are also available. Industry hosts cover a wider range of pest disciplines in addition to traditional weed science research, and include research and demonstration field and greenhouse trials, contract research, service and technical management and trait development.

This scholarship has operated for several years and provides \$1500 for each winner for their expenses during experience. This year's application deadline was May 15, 2023. Details regarding the scholarship, including application materials, eligibility, and host information can be found on the SWSS website <https://www.swss.ws/enrichment-scholarship/>. Winners will be required to provide a presentation on their experience at the SWSS annual meeting. We encourage students to consider this unique opportunity, as this has often been the 'turning point' in the careers of many of the former winners.

Weeds Contest Information

This year the SWSS is hosting the National Weed Science Contest, which will be held in Union City, TN at the Bayer Research Farm. Contest dates are July 25th – 27th. Tentative plan is to arrive to Union City, TN on the July 25th that afternoon/evening to register for the event. The actual contest will take place on July 26th, followed by an awards banquet/reception that evening. Travel day on the July 27th.

We currently have over 215 students registered for the competition (graduate and undergraduate teams) with all the regional weed science societies being represented. We are currently still in need of volunteers to help with the contest. Please consider volunteering to help with this contest.

Below is a link to register as a volunteer:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=e7Oy_KBda0abgwAUtnp8eIylA2FpDZJIjbyXm9zJ8mVUQU80NE1ZVzZHNDdVUFhDNjNVUU5WODExQyQIQCN0PWcu

Regards,

Matthew Wiggins, Contest Committee Chair; Garrett Montgomery, 2023 Host; Joey Williams, 2023 Host

Are You on a SWSS Committee?

The Southern Weed Science Society is successful due to the many volunteers that help the organization run. Serving the organization is an excellent way to ensure its continued success and interact with fellow members.

To find the current SWSS Committee List for 2023 and for more information about each committee and its role within the organization, please click here: <http://www.swss.ws/society-information/committees/>.

If you're interested in volunteering for a committee, please contact the chair of the committee or send an email to tbutts@uada.edu.



@SouthWeedSciSoc



Weed Science Society Presidents Visit Capitol Hill



Weed Science Society Presidents stop for a picture in front of the U.S. Capitol while going between meetings in the House and Senate Office Building on April 18-20, 2023. *From left to right: Dr. Wes Everman, North Carolina State University, NEWSS President; Curtis Rainbolt, BASF, WSSS President; Carroll Moseley, Syngenta, WSSA President; Eric Castner, FMC, SWSS President; and Dr. Reid Smeda, University of Missouri, NCWSS President.*

Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy hosted the Weed Science Society Presidents for visits with members of Congress and their staff during the week of April 17th. The group met with Senators and Representatives and their staff to discuss and share the need for research funding in areas such as IR-4, NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) as well as support for research and infrastructure improvements as part of the 2023 Farm Bill. While on Capital Hill, the group also attended the House Ag Committee hearing with EPA Administrator Michael Regan and Senate Ag Committee hearing on the 2023 Farm Bill as related to conservation programs. Another highlight was attending the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural (NCFAR) board meeting as well as the CropLife America/RISE Regulatory Conference where the keynote speaker was Rod Snyder, Senior Advisor for Agriculture to EPA Administrator Regan. Many thanks to Lee Van Wychen for all of his efforts in representing our Weed Science Societies on Capital Hill and keeping our priorities in front of key policy influencers.



Eric Castner visits with Oklahoma Senator James Lankford during Capital Hill visits by Weed Science Society Presidents on April 19, 2023. Pictured – Senator James Lankford and SWSS President Eric Castner.

Weed Science Society of North Carolina Update



April 3, 2023

The Weed Science Society of North Carolina (WSSNC) met on March 16, 2023 at the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, NC. After celebrating over forty years as a society, the board invited some of our founding and former student members to speak about how the field of weed science and the WSSNC shaped their careers. Attendance was excellent with over 100 registered members. Invited guest speakers included; Dr. Jerry Baron, Dr. Rich Bonanno, Dr. Harold Coble, Mr. John Harden, Dr. Carroll Johnson, Dr. Dustin Lewis, and Dr. Joe Neal. In addition to invited speakers, current NC State Weed Science graduate students, Mr. Colton Blankenship, Ms. April Dodds, and Mr. Stephen Ippolito, presented current research. The WSSNC recognized Dr. Katie Jennings with the 2023 Distinguished Service Award.

The WSSNC, in keeping with a tradition of supporting students, also distributed \$8,000 in endowment funds to students pursuing various enrichment activities. These request varied from presenting findings at various society meetings to visiting industries and other universities to enrich their graduate education. Outstanding student awards were presented to Dr. Eric Jones (PhD) and Mr. Stephen Ippolito (MS). Sixteen students competed in the student poster contest; winners are below.

Ph.D. Poster Contest

First Place - Jose de Sanctis, "Response of Italian ryegrass Accessions from Southern Piedmont Region in North Carolina to Spring Burndown Herbicides"

Second Place - Estefania Gomiero Polli, "Soybean response to simulated drift of herbicides commonly used to manage roadside vegetation in North Carolina"

Third Place – Stephen Ippolito, "Critical Timing of Palmer Amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*) Removal in Stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*)"

M.S. Poster Contest Award

First Place – Brock Dean, "Evaluation of Residual Herbicides Coated on Granular Fertilizer in Cotton"

Second Place – Jacob Forehand, "Does Cotton Seed Quality Influence Tolerance to PRE-Herbicides?"

Third Place – Gene Fox, "Steam Disinfestation of Soil with and without Accelerants"



Invited speakers and retired weed science faculty at the 41st Annual meeting of the Weed Science Society of NC.



Dr. Katie Jennings is presented the Distinguished Service Award by Dr. Joe Neal.



Mr. Stephen Ippolito is presented the Outstanding M.S. Student Award by Vice President Charlie Cahoon.

2024 WSSA/SWSS Annual Meeting Call for Symposia



Call for Symposia

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) meeting jointly with the Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS)
Hyatt Regency San Antonio
San Antonio, TX
January 22 to 25, 2024

We are thrilled to offer a joint WSSA/SWSS annual meeting to be held at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio in San Antonio, TX on January 22 to 25, 2024.

WSSA/SWSS members are invited to submit proposals for symposia at our annual meeting. **The proposal deadline is June 12, 2023.** Members of each board will evaluate the proposed symposia based on the justification, the target audience, publication plans, and the completeness of the proposal agenda and budget. Symposia organizers are strongly urged to consider publication of the symposium papers in one of the WSSA's journals and publication will be one of the factors considered in selecting symposia for the meeting.

Please see the guidelines below for symposia funding from the WSSA. Requests for travel support can be made for non-members only.

Symposium proposals should be emailed directly to the WSSA President Elect and Program Chair Gregory Dahl (gkdahl@landolakes.com) and copied to the SWSS President Elect and Program Chair Todd Baughman (todd.baughman@okstate.edu) by **June 12, 2023**. *You will receive an email confirmation that your proposal has been received.* If you have any questions, feel free to email Greg and/or Todd.

GUIDELINES FOR DISPOSITION OF WSSA FUNDS FOR SYMPOSIA EXPENSES

Funds are available to support symposia approved by the WSSA Board of Directors for the upcoming meeting. These funds can be used by the symposium organizers, working in conjunction with the Program Chair, for expenses incurred in securing speakers. The intent of these funds is to support travel of non-member speakers.

The following guidelines are intended to help the symposia organizers and the Program Committee in allocating available funds. For a half-day symposium, the maximum allowable budget will be \$5000 of which up to \$2000 can be used for symposium publication costs. For full-day symposia, the maximum allowable budget will be \$6,000 of which up to \$2,000 can be used for symposia publication costs. The funds will be allocated as necessary to partially cover nonmember speaker travel expenses.

No honoraria will be offered to any speaker. No more than three nights lodging will be offered to nonmember symposium speakers. All symposium speakers who are not members of the WSSA will be offered free registration at the annual meeting and a free ticket to society events (other than tours) during that week. Funds for reimbursement of some, or all, travel expenses (travel, meals, and lodging) will be made available to non-member symposium speakers based on need, availability of funds, and the value of the speakers to the program.

Single or Double room rates at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio for the 2024 meeting will be \$225 per night.

If less than the maximum allowable funds (\$5000 for the half-day; \$6000 for a full day) are used for speaker travel expenses, the difference cannot be used for other purposes. Chairs should contact their intended speakers and determine their financial needs for participation. This information should be incorporated into the detailed budget for the proposed symposium.

Symposium proposals should be emailed directly to the WSSA President Elect and Program Chair Gregory Dahl (gkdahl@landolakes.com) and copied to the SWSS President Elect and Program Chair Todd Baughman (todd.baughman@okstate.edu) by **June 12, 2023**. *You will receive an email confirmation that your proposal has been received.* If you have any questions, feel free to email Greg Dahl and or Todd Baughman.

The WSSA Program Chair will inform the organizers of the symposia selected for funding. Symposium organizers that receive funding can then proceed with offers of funding to nonmember speakers. In no event should symposium organizers make funding commitments exceeding those approved by the board. Symposium organizers are free to seek additional or alternate funding sources if symposia budget limits are insufficient to cover travel expenses for non-member speakers. Symposia organizers should strongly consider publication of symposia papers in Weed Science, Weed Technology or Invasive Plant Science Management.

Gregory Dahl 2024 WSSA Program Chair

Todd Baughman 2024 SWSS Program Chair

SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL FORM
2024 Annual WSSA/ SWSS Meeting, San Antonio, TX

Title:

Organizers:

Contact Person:

Phone:

Email:

Justification and Objectives (approximately 300 words):

Target Audience:

Publication or Outreach Plans associated with symposium presentations:

Associated Section(s):

Length of Proposed Program:

Proposed Titles and Speakers:

Budget Requested: (Please specify the expenditure of the funds as opposed to submitting an overall amount. The more detailed the budget, the better the WSSA/ SWSS Boards of Directors can evaluate the proposal.)

WASHINGTON REPORT

April 21, 2023
Lee Van Wychen

November Weed Science Congressional Visits

As I write this, I and the five Weed Science Society presidents just completed Congressional Visits from April 18 -20. I will save that info for later since President Castner will include some updates in his report. I would like to highlight the November visits. We had three Weed Science Society presidents and two Science Policy Fellows conduct 15 Congressional meetings on weed science issues during the week of November 15, 2022 in Washington DC. They also met with the American Soybean Association, CropLife America and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss issues surrounding Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).



Three Presidents and Two Fellows. Weed Science Society Presidents and WSSA Science Policy Fellows stop for a picture in front of the U.S. Capitol while going between meetings in the House and Senate Office Buildings on November 15, 2022. From left to right: Navdeep Godara, Virginia Tech, WSSA Science Policy Fellow; Dr. Stanley Culpepper, University of Georgia, WSSA President; Dr. Darrin Dodds, Mississippi State University, SWSS President; Dr. David Simpson, Corteva, NCWSS President; and Taylor Randell, University of Georgia, WSSA Science Policy Fellow.



Meeting with the House Agriculture Appropriations Committee Chairman, Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA) on November 16, 2022 in Washington DC. Pictured (L to R): Taylor Randell (UGA) and Navdeep Godara (VA Tech), WSSA Science Policy Fellows; Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA), David Simpson (Corteva), NCWSS President; Stanley Culpepper (UGA), WSSA President, Darrin Dodds (MS State), SWSS President, and Lee Van Wychen (WSSA) Executive Director of Science Policy. (Note- the Georgia peanuts on the table next to a Weed Bingo game!)

WSSA Science Policy Committee: Past and Present

Two Directors of Science Policy and two of the three chairs of the Science Policy Committee (formerly known as the Washington Liaison Committee) pose for a picture after the general session at the WSSA/NEWSS 2023 annual meeting in Arlington, VA. Their leadership of the Science Policy Committee extends from 1990 to present. The only Science Policy Committee chair missing is Donn Shilling, Georgia, who chaired the committee from 2010 to 2018.



Pictured (L to R): Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy: 2005 - present; Rich Bonanno, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Director, North Carolina State Extension, and Chair, WSSA Washington Liaison/Science Policy Committee: 1990 – 2010; Janis McFarland, retired Syngenta; Chair of WSSA Science Policy Committee: 2018 – present; and Rob Hedberg, retired USDA-NIFA, WSSA Congressional Fellow 1995-1996 and Director of Science Policy, Washington Liaison/Science Policy Committee 1999 – 2005.

WSSA Research Priorities Symposium Hosts 13 Federal Agency Reps

Thirteen federal agencies participated in a symposium held during the WSSA/NEWSS 2023 annual meeting that focused on identifying research gaps and weed management needs in both managed and natural ecosystems. The symposium was co-organized by Steve Young, USDA-ARS National Program Leader for Weeds and Invasive Pests and Jim Kells, WSSA NIFA Fellow. Dan Brainerd, Michigan State University and Chair of the Research Priorities Committee, shared insights from the 2022 research priorities survey to facilitate a discussion on the future of weed science in terms of research needs, program support, and national initiatives.



Federal agency reps participating in the WSSA research priorities symposium.

*(Pictured first row: L to R) Paul Heimowitz, Department of the Interior (DOI) - US Geological Survey (USGS); Scott Pfister, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); Steve Young, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Jessica L. Burnett, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); **Seth Flanagan**, DOI - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and **FICMNEW Co-chair**; Doug Burkett, Department of Defense (DOD) Armed Forces Pest Management Board (AFPMB); (Second Row): Jim Kells, WSSA-NIFA Fellow; Mike Ielmini, USDA Forest Service (USFS); Jeremy Crossland, DOD - Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE); Vijay Nandula, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA); Cameron Douglass, USDA Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP); Eric Bradley, Department of Energy, Office of Sustainable Environmental Stewardship (DOE – EHSS-21); **Chris Taliga**, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and **FICMNEW Co-chair**; Terri Hogan, DOI - National Park Service (NPS); Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy.*

What is FICMNEW?

Since 12 of the current 20 FICMNEW agency members were present at the WSSA Research Priorities symposium, let's talk about my most favorite acronym in all of Washington DC FICMNEW is the **Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW)**. It meets regularly (quarterly or monthly) and represents a formal partnership between federal agencies with direct invasive plant management and regulatory responsibilities spanning across the United States and territories. These agencies support weed science research or invasive plant management, or both, through grant funding, technical assistance, and scientific studies. In addition to the 12 Federal agencies and their principals listed above (Note: NASA was represented at symposium, but is not a FICMNEW member agency at present), the remaining eight Federal agency members and their principals are:

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA - AMS) Ernest Allen
DOI Bureau of Indian Affairs (DOI – BIA) Thomas Mendez
DOI Bureau of Reclamation (DOI – BOR) Jolene Trujillo
Department of Transportation (DOT) Rhonda Solomon
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Gisele Nighswander
Farm Service Agency (USDA – FSA) open

Federal Highway Administration (DOT – FHWA) Richard Darden
US Fish & Wildlife Service (DOI – FWS) Xiomara Labiosa

While the FICMNEW federal agency meetings among the principals are closed, there is an open-to-the-public meeting typically following their closed meeting. The next open meeting is:

FICMNEW Open Meeting: April 26, 2023, 1:00 pm EST/11:00 am MDT

Presentation: Efforts to Control European Frogbit

Presenters: Thomas Alwin and Sarah Lesage from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

FICMNEW Call-in information: The public meeting will be held virtually. Call in instructions will be sent via email. Please email Seth Flanigan, sflanigan@blm.gov, if you are not on the FICMNEW electronic list and would like to receive a meeting invitation.

The IR-4 Project Commemorates 60 Years of Impact

This year, the IR-4 Project commemorates 60 years of operation. Since its establishment by land grant universities and the USDA in 1963, IR-4 has championed specialty crop growers by facilitating the registration of safe, effective pest management solutions to meet their unique needs.

Specialty crops, which include fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, and horticulture crops, are not typically served by agrochemical companies' registration efforts. Larger acreage, "major crops" (like corn and soybeans) typically yield higher returns on investment. This "minor use problem" spurred the founding of IR-4.

IR-4 upholds specialty crops as essential components of a healthy diet, a thriving landscape, and a robust U.S. economy. Since its founding, IR-4 has secured over 23,000 pest management product registrations through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for food crops (and countless others for ornamental crops). IR-4 evaluates a range of tools — including reduced-risk chemical and bio-based pesticides, as well as emerging technologies and integrated solutions. According to an economic impact study by Michigan State University in 2022, IR-4 contributes \$8.97 billion annually to the gross domestic product. [More info about the IR-Project.](#)



Weed Scientists attending the 60 year Celebration of the IR-4 Project on March 7 in Washington DC. Pictured (L to R): Rob Hedberg, retired USDA-NIFA, former WSSA Director of Science Policy; Lee Van Wychen, WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy; Ray McAllister, retired on April 3 as Senior Director, Regulatory Policy at CropLife America; Dirk Drost, retired Syngenta, Minor Use Foundation chairman, Doug Buhler, Assistant Vice President of Research and Innovation at Michigan State University; Dan Kunkel, former IR-4 Project manager, Northeast Field Product Development Director at AMVAC Chemical Corporation; Jerry Baron, Executive Director of the IR-4 Project; Janis McFarland, retired Syngenta, WSSA Science Policy Committee chair.

WRDA 2022 Passes House and Senate

The Senate passed the 2022 **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)** by a vote of 83-11 in early December, well after the House passed their version of WRDA last summer. The WRDA bill conference agreement (H.R. 7776) was attached to the massive 4,400 plus page National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) where it was signed into law by the president. aw.

WDRA has been reauthorized by Congress every two years since 2014 to fund the projects and research carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Overall, WDRA will authorize more than \$37 billion in funds for inland waterways projects. In Sec. 8305, Invasive Species, on page 3,387 of the bill, the following aquatic invasive species provisions were added:

Amends 33 USC 2263a: Aquatic invasive species research by adding **hydrilla** to the list of priority species : *“In general- As part of the ongoing activities of the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) to address the spread and impacts of aquatic invasive species, ACOE shall undertake research on the prevention, management, and eradication of aquatic invasive species, including Asian carp, elodea, **hydrilla**, quagga mussels, and zebra mussels.”*

Increases from \$50 million to **\$75 million per year** through **FY 2028** for ACOE invasive species partnerships with states and other Federal agencies to carry out actions to prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate invasive species that adversely impact water quantity, water quality, **or ecosystems** in the Platte River Basin, the Upper Colorado River Basin, the Upper Snake River Basin, **the Lake Erie Basin, the Ohio River Basin** and the Upper Missouri River Basin. Priority shall be given to projects that are intended to control or eradicate **Russian olive** (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), **hydrilla** (*Hydrilla verticillata*) or **saltcedar** (*Tamarix spp*).

The Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) demonstration program adds 8 new focus areas to the original 6 focus areas. The **HAB demonstration program is authorized for \$25 million** total until expended by ACOE to determine the causes of, and implement measures to effectively detect, prevent, treat, and eliminate HABs associated with water resources development projects. The HAB demonstration program focus areas include:

- the Great Lakes;
- the tidal and inland waters of the State of New Jersey, including Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey;
- the coastal and tidal waters of the State of Louisiana;
- the waterways of the counties that comprise the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California;
- the Allegheny Reservoir Watershed, New York;
- Lake Okeechobee, Florida;
- the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers, Florida;
- Lake Sidney Lanier, Georgia;
- Rio Grande River Basin, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas;
- lakes and reservoirs in the State of Ohio;
- the Upper Mississippi River and tributaries;
- Detroit Lake, Oregon;
- Ten Mile Lake, Oregon; and
- the coastal waters of the United States Virgin Islands.

Adds the **Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California** to federally authorized water resources development projects. Specifically, ACOE shall periodically update the Invasive Species Policy Guidance, developed under section 104 of the River and Harbor Act of 1958 (33 U.S.C. 610) and the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 4701 et seq.), in accordance with the most recent National Invasive Species Council Management Plan developed pursuant to Executive Order 13112 to include specific efforts at federally authorized water resources development projects located in:

- high-altitude lakes;
- the Tennessee and Cumberland River basins; and
- the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California.**

Xochitl Torres Small Nominated for #2 Post at USDA



On February 16, Xochitl Torres Small was nominated to be Deputy Secretary for USDA under Secretary Tom Vilsack. The former New Mexico congresswoman (2019 – 2021) is currently serving as the USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development since 2021.

Torres graduated from Mayfield High School in Las Cruces, NM in absentia while she earned her International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma from Waterford Kamhlaba United World College in Mbabane, Swaziland. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree from Georgetown University in 2008 and her Juris Doctor degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law. Torres Small worked as a field representative for U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) from 2009 to 2012. She served as a federal law clerk in the New Mexico District from 2015 to 2016. She also worked as a water attorney with the Kemp Smith law firm.

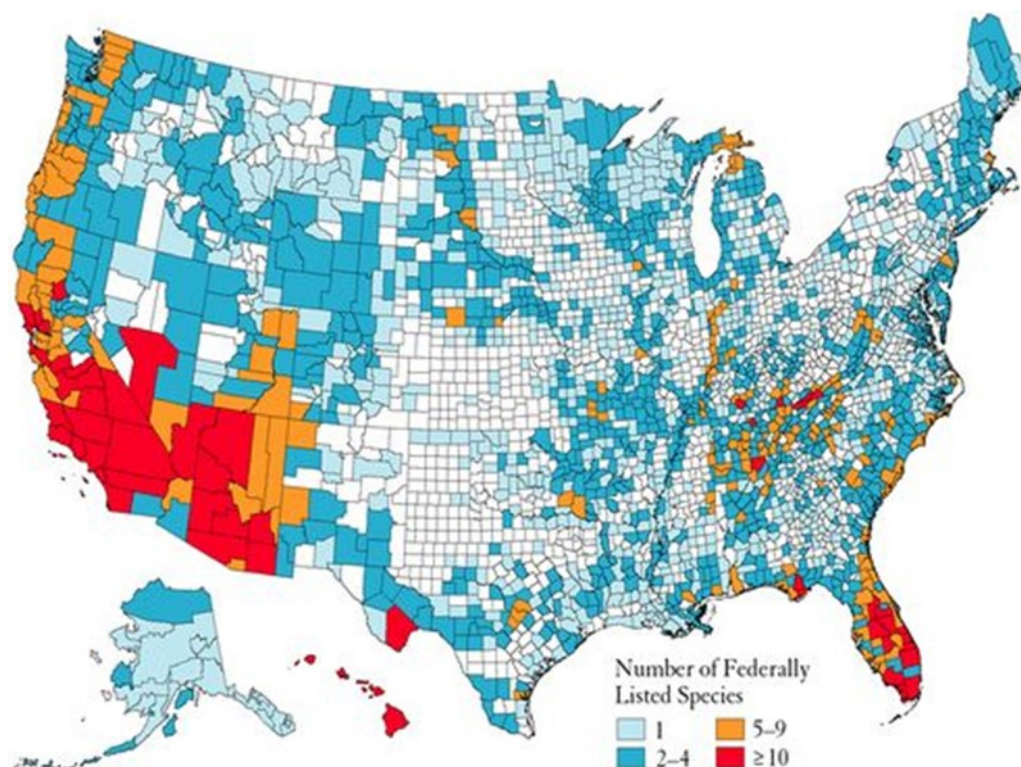
Kevin Shea, APHIS Administrator, has been serving as Acting Deputy Secretary since March 3 when former Deputy Secretary Jewel Bronaugh retired.

Weed Science Societies Comment on EPA's Endangered Species Act Workplan

On February 14, the WSSA, along with APMS, NCWSS, NEWSS, SWSS and WSWs [submitted comments](#) in response to EPA's request for information on the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** Workplan Update. This is a major step for EPA to harmonize its obligations under the ESA and the **Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)**. There are approximately 1,700 endangered species of which approximately 900 are plants, plus another 700 critical habitats. It is anticipated that glyphosate and other herbicides will impact almost all of those.

The draft ESA Workplan Update provides more details about how EPA plans to impose various mitigation measures that will be required on pesticide labels to meet its ESA obligations when registering a pesticide. There are concerns about some of the mitigation options such as “buffers to reduce pesticide drift and water runoff” or “do not use when rain is expected in the next 48 hours” — which raises other issues such as what or how compliance might be proven or enforced.

The ESA Workplan Update also describes initiatives that, according to EPA, will help it and other federal agencies improve approaches to mitigation under the ESA and improve the interagency consultation process outlined in the ESA Workplan. These initiatives include EPA's work to identify ESA mitigation measures for pilot species, incorporate early ESA mitigation measures for groups of pesticides (e.g., broadleaf herbicides), and develop region-specific ESA mitigations.



Endangered Species by County. Source: Precious Heritage: The Status of Biodiversity in the United States.

The WSSA has also issued a press release on April 4 “[WSSA Encourages Growers to Act Now to Understand the Impact of EPA’s Endangered Species Act Compliance Initiatives](#)” trying to raise awareness of the coming changes. **The bottom line - farmers and land owners need to become familiar with the EPA’s updated workplan and how to access site specific application instructions online through EPA’s [Bulletins Live! Two](#).** As we found out in January 2022 on the revised ESA-compliant Enlist One and Enlist Duo labels, applications might be prohibited in entire counties.

EPA Issues Endangered Species Protections for Three Herbicides and a Soil Fumigant

On February 1, the EPA implemented measures to protect 28 federally endangered and threatened Pacific salmon and steelhead species and their designated critical habitat from the effects of **bromoxynil, prometryn, metolachlor, and 1,3-D** (also known as telone).

Biological Opinions

In June 2021, after receiving public comments, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued final biological opinions for bromoxynil, prometryn, metolachlor, and 1,3-D. NMFS’s biological opinions found that registered uses of these pesticides do not jeopardize listed salmon and steelhead species or adversely modify their critical habitats. **Because use of these pesticides may result in “take” of individuals of listed salmon and steelhead species, the biological opinions also describe measures to minimize the potential for take and any impacts of take.** “Take” includes (among other things) unintentionally harming or killing an individual of a listed species.

Implementation

EPA has implemented these biological opinions by issuing [Endangered Species Protection Bulletins](#), available on the [Bulletins Live! Two](#) website, and approving label amendments to protect listed species, thereby fulfilling its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for these pesticides for the listed salmon and steelhead species and their critical habitat.

The [Endangered Species Protection Bulletins](#) for the four pesticides **describe geographically specific use limitations** to protect listed salmon and steelhead species and critical habitat. The Bulletins include mitigation

measures such as no-spray buffers, retention ponds, and vegetated ditches to minimize potential take.

The amended labeling for bromoxynil, prometryn, metolachlor, and 1,3-D products includes instructions for pesticide users to obtain Bulletins and follow their required mitigation measures. The labeling also includes guidance on how to report ecological incidents associated with pesticide applications, should users observe any. This work aligns with the goals outlined in EPA's April 2022 ESA Workplan and its November 2022 ESA Workplan Update to provide practical, timely protections for listed species from pesticides.

EPA Aims to Reinstate 2015 Worker Protections From Pesticides

The EPA is requesting public comment on a proposed rule that would retain various pesticide Application Exclusion Zone (AEZ) requirements under the 2015 Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) that were not implemented as part of a previous agency final rule currently under a court-ordered stay.

Unveiled February 16, the pre-proposal seeks to “improve and modernize” protections under the agency’s 2015 standard on agricultural worker protection. EPA classifies the application exclusion zone as “the area surrounding the application that must be free of all persons, other than appropriately trained and equipped handlers, during pesticide applications.”

Under the proposal, EPA would reinstate provisions including:

- Applying the AEZ beyond an establishment’s boundaries and when workers are within easements, such as for utility workers to access telephone lines.

- Establishing AEZ distances for ground-based spray applications of 25 feet for medium or larger sprays when sprayed from a height greater than 12 inches from the soil surface or planting medium, and 100 feet for fine sprays.

EPA issued a final rule in October 2020 revising the AEZ requirement. However, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York last year extended its stay of the rule, which initially was granted on Dec. 28, 2020 – the day before the final rule was to have taken effect.

The prepublication version of the proposal states that “since the 2020 AEZ rule has not been implemented due to the court-ordered stay,” the 2015 WPS “continues to provide the operative regulatory language for the AEZ requirements during the current stay and any future extensions of the stay.”

Still, the agency proposes to keep elements of the 2020 rule, including:

- Exempting farm owners’ immediate family members from the requirement.

- Establishing clarifying language stating that pesticide applications suspended as a result of individuals entering an exclusion zone may be resumed after the individuals have left the area.

EPA officially issued the proposed rule titled “**Pesticides: Agricultural Worker Protection Standard; Reconsideration of the Application Exclusion Zone Amendments**” on March 13, 2023. The proposed rule is available at [EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0133-0002](https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pesticides-agricultural-worker-protection-standard-reconsideration-application-exclusion-zone-amendments). Comments are due on or before **May 12, 2023**.



Dr. Chris Boomsma Selected as New CAST EVP/CEO

The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) announced on March 8 that Dr. Chris Boomsma will be their next Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer (EVP/CEO). Kent Schescke, the current EVP/CEO, will retire at the end of August after eight successful years with CAST.

Dr. Boomsma is currently serving as the Director of Education for the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America (ACSESS). In addition, he is the Director of Science and Strategy for Decode 6 educational platform. Prior to joining ACSESS, he worked as a research director for Purdue University and a strategist and scientist at Dow AgroSciences (now

Corteva). More details at <https://www.cast-science.org/cast-announces-dr-chris-boomsma-as-next-evp-ceo/>

2023 National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) Recap

NISAW was held virtually from February 20-26 and organized by the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA). Sponsors included the WSSA, Wyoming Weed and Pest Council, Washington Invasive Species Council, SePRO, UPL, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Bayer. [NISAW](#) included:

- 5 Webinars
- 36 webinar presenters
- 65 events on the NISAW calendar
- 759 attendees
- 1,045 advocacy letters sent to members of Congress
- 11,000+ people reached via email marketing

NISAW 2024 is scheduled for **February 26 – March 3, 2024** in Washington DC. This will be the 25th anniversary and planning is already under way. My hope is that all the invasive species stakeholder groups traveling to Washington DC will make **establishing an invasive species management fund** their #1 priority.

Establishing an Invasive Species Management Fund

A common theme during the **Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC)** meeting held virtually on March 6 – 8, and the first ISAC meeting since 2019, is that we need a consolidated all-purpose **source of funding for invasive species prevention, research, and management**.

Global trade provides many benefits to us as consumers, but there is no question that one of the indirect costs is the importation of invasive species. I have begun work on Capitol Hill discussing legislation similar to what Hawaii passed into law in 2008 ([HB2843](#)) where an inspection, quarantine, and eradication service fee was assessed on the net weight of freight, computed on the basis of **50 cents for every 1,000 pounds of freight** brought into the state.

As an example, there would be a \$3 fee assessed for a 6,000 pound SUV imported into the U.S. A rough estimate of U.S. import data suggests that this inspection, quarantine, and eradication service fee would generate about \$1 billion per year for a federal invasive species management fund. Please email me with any concerns or suggestions.

China Battles Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) at Unprecedented Scale

Science. 8 MAR 2023. By Erik Stokstad.

Along its 18,000 kilometers of coastline, China has been taken over by a green invader. Smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) grows tall and thick across tidal mudflats, depriving endangered migratory birds of habitat, clogging shipping channels, and ruining clam farms. Now, China aims to beat back 90% of the weed by 2025. “This is a mammoth undertaking,” says Steven Pennings, a coastal ecologist at the University of Houston. “It’s audacious.”

Spartina, native to eastern North America, was brought to China starting in 1979 to stabilize tidal mudflats and turn them into land for agriculture or development. The plan worked, but the *Spartina* kept spreading and now covers about 68,000 hectares, about the area of New York City. The government has realized, says Yihui Zhang, a wetland ecologist at Xiamen University, that “the harm of *Spartina alterniflora* outweighs its benefits.” It dominates native salt marshes, outcompeting native plants that provide food for indigenous species such as the reed parrotbill, which has declined as a result. [Continue reading in Science](#).

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National and Regional Weed Science Meetings

Jul. 24 - 27, 2023 Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), Indianapolis, IN www.apms.org

Dec. 11 - 14, 2023 North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), Minneapolis, MN www.ncwss.org

Jan. 8 - 11, 2024 Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), Gettysburg, PA www.newss.org

Jan. 22 - 25, 2024 Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS), San Antonio, TX www.swss.ws

Jan. 22 - 25, 2024 Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), San Antonio, TX www.wssa.net

Feb. 26–Mar. 3, 2024, 25th National Invasive Species Awareness Week, Washington DC www.nisaw.org

Mar 4 - 7, 2024 Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS), Denver, CO www.wsweedsociety.org