

Hand-weeding – Why is it Important?

As I drive around Minnesota and North Dakota, I see weeds emerging above crop canopies. If these weeds are due to herbicide resistance, then the best management strategy is to remove the plants by hand, unless the weeds are too frequent. A plant that survives an herbicide application, but is removed prior to seed production, can not add to the frequency of resistance within the field. Allowing resistant plants to produce seed only increases the frequency of resistant plants within a population. Species of most concern are Roundup Ready canola, bolting Roundup Ready sugarbeet, waterhemp, giant ragweed, common ragweed, lambsquarters, biennial wormwood, and kochia. An increase in resistant plants will cause a decrease in profit at some time due to increased input costs and crop yield loss. Growers that planted Roundup Ready sugarbeets are contractually bound to remove bolting Roundup Ready sugarbeet plants from their fields. Bolting Roundup Ready sugarbeets are currently visible from the road in some Roundup Ready sugarbeet fields.