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Weed Control in Crimson Clover Seed Fields

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Crimson clover is a winter annual, early planted seed crop. Because of the early planting, the fields frequently are contaminated with volunteer grain and annual grasses. These volunteer crops cannot be effectively controlled with fall tillage prior to crimson clover planting. Because of early seeding, special sprays are needed for the control of the weedy plants commonly found in the seed fields.

Grass and Grain Control

Repeated trials have shown that grassy-type seedling plants can be controlled with properly timed IPC sprays. The recommended rate is 4 pounds of active IPC applied between the dates of December 1 and January 15. IPC affects the root systems of most plants, but is more active on grasses than on legumes. Well-established crimson clover plants are damaged less than the grassy plants. Crimson clover plants in sprayed fields, because of a weakened root system, are damaged more by frost than plants in unsprayed fields. The later the spray is applied, the better established are the crimson clover plants before spraying.

Perennial Grass Control

Quackgrass, creeping velvetgrass, and bentgrass can be controlled by Eptam treatments in the field prior to planting the crimson clover. Four pounds (6 pints) of Eptam should be sprayed on the well-prepared seedbed and incorporated by immediate double discing. The effectiveness of Eptam treatments on annual

weeds depends on the fall weather. With cool damp weather, annual weed control is fair. With hot dry weather, annual weed control is not as good as obtained with IPC applied in December or early January. Eptam is not recommended when perennial creeping grass plants are not a problem.

Broadleaf Weed Control

Mustard, radishes, and hairy vetch often are weed problems in crimson clover seed fields. These plants can be controlled by properly timed sprays of MCPA-MCP. Mustard and radishes should be sprayed in the rosette stage of growth. Usually this is in December or early January. The recommended rate of spraying is 1/4 pound of active chemical per acre.

Best control of hairy vetch is obtained by spraying after the vetch plants are well stooled. This is usually between February 15 and March 15. Hairy vetch is more tolerant of MCPA than mustard or radishes. Sprays applied too early often result in the regrowth of the hairy vetch before harvest of the crimson clover.

Crimson clover fields contaminated with both mustard and hairy vetch should be sprayed when the mustard starts to send out the flower stalk. The date is usually about February 1. At this time the hairy vetch has usually started to stool. Crimson clover fields should not receive two applications of MCPA in one year.

MCPA sprays are not recommended to be used on crimson clover fields which have only trace amounts of broadleaf weedy plants.

Crimson Clover Weed Spray Program

Weeds	Chemical	Rate/acre	Application time
Annual grass	IPC	4 pounds	Dec.-Jan. 15
Perennial grass	Eptam	3-4 pounds	Preplant incorporated
Broadleaf annuals	MCPA	1/4 pound	Feb. 15-March 15



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