

Don't Ignore Marestalk

By: Mike Hunter

Marestalk (a.k.a Horseweed) is a weed that can be found in many crop fields, fallow areas, ditch banks and along roadsides in NNY. This is a weed that is becoming a big problem for growers in Western New York due to the fact that there are now significant populations of glyphosate and ALS resistant marestalk in that area of the state. We have not identified any resistant populations of marestalk in our region yet but it does not mean that we don't have any. It is not going to be a matter of *if* we end up with glyphosate resistant populations of marestalk, it is a matter of *when*.

Tillage practices can influence weed species shifts. Intensive tillage practices will reduce population densities of marestalk. This may be one reason that we don't really think too much about marestalk or consider it a problem in NNY. However, as we begin to see a transition to more no tillage in our area, we will also begin seeing much higher populations of marestalk showing up in our fields. For those not familiar with what marestalk looks like I took this photo of marestalk in one of our no till soybean fields in NNY (see photo 1).

Marestalk is a winter or summer annual weed that reproduces by seeds. Seeds can germinate in the spring or late summer. Those seeds that germinate in late summer will overwinter as a small rosette of leaves and grow a flowering stem in the early spring. To successfully manage marestalk in no till cropping systems it is important to implement control tactics in both the fall and spring.

No till growers that find marestalk seedlings after harvest should consider a fall burndown herbicide. It is especially important to do this if the field will be rotated to soybeans in the spring. If we were to find glyphosate and ALS marestalk, it is more difficult to control this weed with postemergence herbicide programs in soybean than it is in corn. Instead of using just glyphosate as the fall burndown program, we should consider including 2,4-D ester in the tank mix.

Let's be diligent and keep a lookout for potential herbicide resistant populations of marestalk in NNY. We need to remain proactive and try manage herbicide resistant weeds to the best of our abilities. If you are finding higher populations of marestalk or are not getting adequate control of this weed please contact Mike Hunter (315)788-8450 or Kitty O'Neil (315)854-1218.



Photo 1. Marestalk in no till soybeans