

# New crop technology offers options

By WILLIE VOGT

**T**HE long-awaited announcement right at the end of 2008 from Bayer CropScience means farmers will have new tools for weed control in 2009. Bayer announced that more than 85 companies will be marketing Liberty Link soybeans across the country starting this season. That announcement means that growers across the country now have this added weed control choice for their farms, which adds management flexibility to help avoid weed resistance.

Whether you raise cotton, canola, soybeans or corn, you'll have a LibertyLink choice of varieties or hybrids in 2009. For Texas producer Jack Bradford, using the system gives him better control of a troublesome morningglory on his operation. "We find that Roundup doesn't do as much on morningglory, and they come back," says the Demmitt area producer.

He's using Fiber Max cotton with the LibertyLink technology on his operation. That means spraying over the top when weeds are 4 to 6 inches tall. The new herbicide for LibertyLink use is Ignite, which Bradford is tank mixing with fertilizer and crop oil, and applying with 20 gallons of water per acre.

## Avoiding resistance

While Bayer points out there's not documented resistance to glufosinate (the active ingredient in Ignite), weed scientists say early stewardship now will protect the technology. Ford Baldwin, longtime Southern weed specialist and now a private consultant, says combining this new weed control technology with conventional approaches offers the best chance for avoiding resistance.

"Between not only the new trait technologies, we've not used enough conventional technology. There are good herbicides out there, but they can't stand alone," he says. He points to Dual Magnum, atrazine, and the HPPD class of chemistries including Balance and Balance Pro that work well in corn. Combined with herbicide-resistance traits, this offers expanded weed control flexibility.

For Bradford, swapping between the technologies will give him flexibility. Right now he's using a preemergence application of Treflan incorporated to stop pigweed in his fields, along with a post application. In fields where those tough morningglory aren't a problem, he's planting cotton varieties that use glyphosate-tolerance technology.

On Bradford's operation, the rotation is corn. His choice there is hybrids that contain a total package of tools. "We're using corn with the Herculex gene, and Roundup Ready technology," he says. "That way, no matter what cotton I raise — LibertyLink or Roundup Ready — I don't have to worry about drift. That corn has the LibertyLink trait, too."

Baldwin, along with other weed specialists, note that use of LibertyLink crops, glyphosate-tolerant crops and conventional crops can provide a "systematic" type of rotation. "If we get

## Key Points

- LibertyLink soybeans are coming this year.
- Consider rotations to maximize value of this new technology.
- Ignite replaces Liberty as the herbicide for this system.

started on the right foot with LibertyLink, you could rotate it to Roundup Ready soybeans," he notes. "And corn offers the best chance for bringing in conventional herbicides."

The interesting irony in this new-technology news is that while you'll have LibertyLink technology in all those crops, you won't spray with Liberty.

Instead, you'll be using Ignite, a new formulation of glufosinate. "We've cleared the pipeline [of Liberty] and we'll be marketing one product — Ignite — in 2009," says Andy Hurst, product manager, herbicide tolerance traits, Bayer CropScience. "Ignite is 40% more concentrated than the old Liberty formulation that it will replace."



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