

Fall Control for Marestalk or Horseweed

LONNIE MENGARELLI, AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES AGENT

Marestalk or horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*) is a challenging weed to manage in no-till or minimum-till soybeans systems. This weed is classified as a winter annual, but it germinates well into spring and summer, making it even more difficult to manage. In addition to an extended germination window, marestalk can produce up to 200,000 seeds/plant, with approximately 80% of those seeds being able to germinate immediately after maturation. Kansas producers also face the added difficulty of trying to manage glyphosate- and ALS-resistant marestalk.

Acceptable control of fall-emerged marestalk with herbicide applications at planting will be unlikely because the marestalk are generally too large, but control can be achieved with both fall and early spring herbicide applications. Other control options include tillage and cover crops.

Residual herbicides for marestalk control include chlorimuron (Classic, others), flumioxazin (Valor, others), sulfentrazone (Spartan, others), and metribuzin products. Group 4 herbicides such as 2,4-D, dicamba, fluroxypyr (Starane Ultra), or haloxifen (Elevore) are good options to control emerged marestalk, especially populations that are resistant to glyphosate or ALS-inhibiting herbicides. Control of marestalk in the rosette stage is similar among the Group 4 herbicides, but dicamba controls bolted marestalk better than 2,4-D. Saflufenacil (Sharpen) or glufosinate (Liberty, others) can also control bolted marestalk.

Fall and spring tillage has been shown to be effective in controlling marestalk for a spring-planted crop. When tillage is not utilized in the fall, marestalk will establish and be present in the spring. If implementing a minimum tillage system is the goal, research suggests that marestalk can be controlled when a fall herbicide application is followed by shallow tillage in the spring or vice versa.

Utilizing cover crops can result in fewer and smaller marestalk plants in a field. Research in Kansas has shown control of marestalk with a cereal rye cover crop paired with spring herbicide applications. The key to achieving effective suppression of marestalk with cover crops is the accumulation of adequate cover crop biomass before marestalk emerges, so timely cover crop planting is important for this strategy to succeed.

In summary, to have the best chance at a successful weed control program you must be proactive and stay ahead of the curve. Like all weeds, marestalk are easier to kill the smaller they are. Many of next year's plants will come up in the fall and a simple and cheap broadleaf herbicide can reduce the number of weeds for the next spring allowing you to get you ahead and have fewer weeds to contend with.

For additional information, see the "2024 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, and Noncropland" (K-State publication SRP-1183) or check with your local K-State Research and Extension office for a paper copy.

The use of trade names is for clarity to readers and does not imply endorsement of a particular product, nor does exclusion imply non-approval. Always consult the herbicide label for the most current use requirements.

Lonnie Mengarelli is a K-State Research and Extension Agriculture agent assigned to Southwind District. He may be reached at mengo57@ksu.edu or 620-223-3720

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Sarah Lancaster, Extension Weed Science Specialist: slancaster@ksu.edu

Jeremie Kouame, Weed Scientist, Agricultural Research Center – Hays: jkouame@ksu.edu