

Crop Production

Valent herbicide will fight grass in non-GMO sorghum

By BILL SPIEGEL

IN February's *Kansas Farmer* (Page 25), we described an alliance between a California company called Cibus and the National Sorghum Producers to create non-GMO sorghum that would allow for over-the-top herbicide control of grassy weeds.

This month, the two entities have announced that Valent USA will provide the grass herbicide — Select Max with Inside Technology — to be used in conjunction with Cibus' Rapid Trait Development System.

The combination will allow sorghum producers to apply Select Max on fields planted to hybrids equipped with Cibus' RTDS technology, providing a one-pass application of herbicide to thwart grassy weed competition.

"With both Valent and Cibus' missions to provide innovative and sustainable technologies to the agribusiness community, this collaboration will benefit growers and be a natural fit for us," says Trevor Thorley, president and chief operating officer of Valent.

Adds Bruce Maunder, president of the National Grain Sorghum Producers Foundation: "Sorghum producers have

Key Points

- NSP, Cibus and Valent work together on sorghum technology.
- Select Max herbicide will eventually be used in herbicide-tolerant grain sorghum.
- Grass weed control is a frequent frustration for grain sorghum producers.

needed some new grass control options for quite some time. Our partnerships with Cibus and Valent will allow for much-needed technology development in our crop. Once it makes its way into producer fields, it should help increase both yields and profitability for sorghum producers."

About RTDS

The RTDS process works through the cell's natural process of gene repair. Every time a cell copies DNA, it makes "scrivener" errors, or spelling mistakes. These variations happen frequently, which is how natural variation occurs.

Cibus' technology harnesses the cell's own natural DNA repair machinery to correct such spelling mistakes, thus directing DNA repair enzymes to correct and repair the targeted gene in a

specific way in order to produce a desired trait. The process, in its precision, is similar to altering a single letter in a word contained within a large book. Nothing in the genome, other than the changes directed by the process, is altered by this approach.

"RTDS promises a revolution in genetics — a limitless range of value-added new products that are acceptable to environmentally conscious consumers and governments, and help farmers solve their toughest pest management problems," says Keith Walker, president of Cibus. "RTDS technology can be used to create non-GMO plants tolerant to most herbicide chemistries currently marketed to farmers, such as a Select Max-tolerant grain sorghum."

In a November news conference, representatives from the National Sorghum Producers and Cibus estimated that Cibus-powered herbicide-tolerant grain sorghum hybrids could be available to farmers by 2011.

The National Grain Sorghum Producers Foundation plans to use revenues derived from this partnership to reinvest in sorghum research and development as part of a long-term program for sorghum improvement.



"A recent Kansas State University survey of more than 600 sorghum producers from across the United States identified grassy weed control for grain sorghum as their No. 1 research priority," says Joseph Short, Valent product manager.

"Select Max provides fast and complete control of emerged annual and perennial grassy weeds in over 100 crops, including soybean, sunflower, cotton and sugarbeets. Sorghum producers will see increased convenience, yield and profits when they can selectively control grasses with an over-the-top application of Select Max."

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