WISCONSIN STYLE: HOME-BREWED OUTREACH IDEAS AND TOOLS. Chris M. Boerboom and Jerry D. Doll, Professor and Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Agronomy, Madison, WI 53706.

Novel approaches can creatively engage our Extension clientele and improve the delivery of weed management information. In Wisconsin, we used creative techniques in four areas. The first program is the "Biggest Weed Contest," which is held annually at the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, a 3-day summer farm show. At our Weed Doctor's booth in the Extension tent, we provide weed identification and management recommendations to attendees. To increase interest and activity at our booth, we hosted the biggest weed contest for 7 years where the public is encouraged to bring their biggest weed to the farm show. The contest is publicized throughout the state before the event. Each weed is given a "size score," determined as the product of the weed height and width. A single-day and 3-day winners are selected and weed-related prizes are awarded. An average of 21 weeds were entered by contestants each year. The contest creates publicity for the Weed Doctors when people see assorted 5- to 13-feet tall weeds being carted through the grounds to enter the contest and we often have a small crowd gather as weeds are measured. The contest has increased the visibility of our booth, assisted people with weed identification and management, added what is now an annual attraction to Farm Technology Day and increased interaction with general attendees and youth.

The second activity involves WeedSOFT, a bioeconomic decision support system for weed management. The software program contains important elements that are both educational and critical in assessing weed management options. "WeedSOFT Casino" is an interactive presentation that was developed to illustrate many of these biological (e.g., weed-crop interactions that effect yield), regulatory (e.g., label restrictions on herbicide use), and economic (e.g., economic returns to management) features. The presentation starts with a brief overview of WeedSOFT's goals and how to operate the software. Next, several scenarios related to these features are presented under the guise of casino games with specific answers. Participants bet with play money on the answers, which are based on WeedSOFT predictions. At the conclusion of these scenarios, the participant with the greatest "winnings" can purchase a door prize. This format is highly interactive in small audiences and is an effective method to engage audiences and highlight the value of WeedSOFT features. In large audiences, the presentation can be modified so the audience uses score cards to track their responses.

The third project is a simple method to demonstrate herbicide rainfast requirements under field conditions. This project's unique approach was to simulate rain using a standard field sprayer with a 1,000 gallon tank, equipped with large flood nozzles and operated at the slowest speed possible (1.1 mph) to deliver more than 200 gallons of water per acre. Herbicide treatments were applied at four time intervals in a randomized block design prior to the simulated rain. Plots were arranged so that a 15-foot section of the spray boom would "rain" on half of each 30-foot long plot, which left a "non-rain" control for each treatment. All herbicide treatments received the simulated rain nearly simultaneously with this method. Several passes of the sprayer were made until the 1,000 gallons of water were applied to 0.25 acres. The method successfully demonstrated reduced efficacy of glyphosate applied at 0.5 to 4 hours before simulated rain under field conditions.

The fourth idea was creating tools to aid in teaching and diagnosing herbicide injury symptoms. A 2-page herbicide mode of action key with decision points based on site of uptake, translocation, selectivity, and classic symptomology (via corn and soybean images) has been enhanced and reprinted. This key is useful in teaching important diagnostic characteristics at field workshops. A searchable database of herbicide injury images is also being compiled and suggested for regional adoption. These are four examples of novel and extension delivery techniques and tools that we have successfully used with our clientele.

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