The Impediments to Using Best Management Practices

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The major impediment to using best management practices from an industry point of view is the difficulty in coordinating recommendations except in general terms. The Herbicide Resistance Action Committee, which is a committee of technical representatives from the major agrichemical companies, was created in the 1980s to deal with the rising problems of resistance to acetolactate synthase and acetyl CoC carboxylase inhibitors as well as the more established triazine resistance. This committee, of which I was the chair for 4 years, was and still is very active in developing and publishing guidelines on managing herbicide resistance and in creating and supporting a web-based database on the instances of herbicide resistant weeds. However, this committee is confined to technical issues and for legal reasons does not get involved in marketing issues. Industry has been criticized for acting too slowly when resistance is selected for new mechanisms of action, such as the HPPD or Protox inhibitors, but it takes time to really understand the extent of the problem and to determine how to best deal with it. Industry has been very active in urging the maintenance of registration of older herbicides which are vital tools for resistance management. With the advent of widespread glyphosate resistant weeds, industry is also re-emphasizing the discovery of herbicides with new mechanisms of action. Industry has been supportive of regulations that actually deal with herbicide resistance, such as the addition of mechanism of action group number to the label, but each company is reluctant to implement new strategies without the participation of all of the companies. Unilateral action can be non-productive if it is not supported by other companies. This will continue to be an impediment for implementing best management practices and can undermine university and governmental recommendations unless industry is an active participant in developing these practices.