What approaches are most likely to encourage the adoption of best management practices?

*John Soteres, Chair, Herbicide Resistance Action Committee*

The Herbicide Resistance Action Committee is the industry stewardship group focused on weed resistance to herbicides and best practice strategies for resistance management. Our purpose and goal is to further the science related to weed resistance and to provide product stewardship through the development, promotion, and adoption of best management practices. Herbicide resistance is not new. Resistance is a challenge for all herbicides and concerns all sectors of the agricultural community. What’s different today is a greater understanding of this challenge and broader appreciation of the need to implement more diversified management strategies. Management strategies must be effective, reliable, practical and economical, and these strategies must then be communicated to farmers together with the benefits of adopting these practices on the farm. With weed management practices, our task is to convey the long-term benefit of more sustainable integrated practices in contrast to the visible short-term benefits of practices that seem effective today.

We are making progress and the agricultural productivity industry is committed to furthering this progress in cooperation with academics, commodity groups, government agencies and others. The industry is offering financial and non-financial incentives to farmers in support of more diversified and integrated weed management programs. Market research indicates that these incentives are contributing to a positive trend toward increased diversification. The path forward will not be without challenges but it is possible to drive further improvements in weed resistance management through sustainable diversified practices that fit with our best science by:

1. Increasing and improving training and education efforts with a focus on proactive implementation of diversified management,
2. Offering financial incentives, as appropriate, to encourage use of best management practices,

3. Increasing weed management options that will lead to increased diversity through industry-directed chemical and biotechnology research,

4. Funding basic and applied research into herbicide and non-herbicide options in conjunction with other sources, and

5. Increasing product delivery options such as pre-mixes, as a way to address cost and convenience barriers to adoption of best management practices.

The Herbicide Resistance Action Committee and the companies it represents are committed to active stewardship of our herbicide resources and stands as a ready partner with the public sector to further our common goals.