

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **One in 10 weeds at high risk of developing glyphosate resistance**

Results from a study into glyphosate resistance in Australian weeds should be of concern to the nation's fruit growers and vignerons.

Twenty three weed species prevalent in horticultural regions have been found to be at high risk of developing glyphosate resistance, according to the research funded under the National Weeds Program which was managed by the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC).

Two hundred weed species were analysed to determine their innate likelihood to evolve and change in response to continued selection by herbicides. Among the species identified at risk are several troublesome grasses and damaging environmental weeds such as fireweed and parthenium weed.

Project member David Thornby, of the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, says most of the weeds tested are found across Australia.

"While resistance to glyphosate in cropping has been making headlines around the world, this study suggests it could become a problem in any Australian horticultural crop," Mr Thornby said.

"Fruit growers and vignerons have a toolkit of weed management tactics available to them for each species. Where a species is at high risk of developing glyphosate resistance, it is vital not to rely on a single herbicide."

Mr Thornby said most weed managers had multiple problems competing for scarce resources – labour, time, money and attention – so it was important to employ risk assessments to help them decide how to organise their resources.

"From a resistance management perspective, it makes sense to devote more time to planning and monitoring – and increasing the range of management options – to species that appear to be at the highest risk of evolving herbicide resistance.

"It is important to remember, however, that there is no relationship between resistance risk and weediness, invasiveness, or ease of control," said Mr Thornby.

"What this study shows is that we need to be thinking about how we use herbicides in every situation – both agricultural and non-agricultural weed control."

High risk weeds for horticultural and viticultural industries include sowthistle, cobbler's peg, thickhead, crab grass, feathertop Rhodes grass, flaxleaf fleabane and barnyard grass. The latter two species have already evolved resistance to glyphosate in Australia.



Luckily almost half of all species assessed are at low risk of resistance, and the remainder at moderate risk. Despite being at low risk of resistance, some low-scoring species are nevertheless important and highly prevalent weeds, both to horticulture (eg nutgrass, caltrop) and non-horticulture areas (eg salvinia, alligator weed).

Market research as part of this project has also found most fruit and wine producers are ill-prepared to deal with the loss of herbicides through resistance.

The project report is available for review and downloading via [http://www.glyphosateresistance.org.au/articles\\_media.html](http://www.glyphosateresistance.org.au/articles_media.html)

The Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group is supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and key R&D based crop protection companies with an interest in the sustainability of glyphosate.

The AGSWG web site also has a range of information about glyphosate resistance including a register of glyphosate resistant weed populations and guides and links for management of glyphosate resistance in different crops and management situations.

**ENDS**

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Annual ryegrass resistant to glyphosate in a South Australian vineyard

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