

## **2010 WSSA Committee Report to Members Summary for 2010 and Action Plan for 2011**

**Committee Code and Name:** E13 – Public Awareness Committee

**Committee Chair:** Janis McFarland; **Members, 2010:** John Jachetta (WSSA), Joyce Lancaster (ex-officio), Anne Légère (CWSS), Dwight Lingenfelter (NEWSS), Greg MacDonald (SWSS), Don Morishita (WSSA), Jesse Richardson (WSWS), Judy Shearer (APMS), Carol Somody (WSSA), Sarah True (WSSA/Graduate Student Representative), Lee Van Wychen (ex-officio), Bryan Young (NCWSS)

**Board Coordinator:** John Jachetta

**Committee Members Rotating Off, Feb. 2011:** NA      **Appropriate Replacements, Feb. 2011:** NA

### **2010 Summary of Activities**

What were the committee's goals for 2010? Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact, and management through press releases and website information. Increase awareness of weed science as a career.

List the committee's accomplishments in 2010: 1) Prepared and distributed 12 press releases. 2) Continued to utilize Master Media Lists using Cision and MediaAtlas and segmented by coverage area, including gardening & horticulture, agribusiness, farming, environment, lawn care, etc. Continued to complemented our current distribution (PR Web and 80 daily newspapers in key markets) to include trade publications, smaller daily and weekly newspapers, broadcast news outlets and online publications. 3) Developed videos which will be used to support the Careers Brochure, website and press releases. 4) Conducted Debunking Agricultural Myths Contest to stimulate ideas for website and press releases.

Membership involvement (person-hours): 500+

What information was posted on the WSSA website? 12 press releases with links to associated photos. Seventeen of more than seventy screened videos and six winning myths will be posted on the website in January, 2011.

How much funds were requested? How much was spent? The PA Committee received \$18,000 from the Board for the activities of the Weed Science Subject Matter Liaison to the EPA and \$19,000 to achieve public awareness goals. A fund-raising letter and myth contest donations raised an additional \$36,500 and \$1000, respectively, for the committee's public awareness activities. Cost of the EPA Liaison was \$11,001.97. Public awareness activities cost \$22,227 (hired communication expertise, press release distribution charges, WSSA Meeting booth expenses, and myth contest prizes). Thus a total of \$33,228.97 was spent for the EPA Liaison and for public awareness, using none

of the Society's funds. A net profit of \$3771.03 was returned for the Society's use in 2011.

What was the impact of the committee activities/accomplishments on the following: membership, publication, policy, legislation, and/or education? The 12 press releases were accessed by various media and the public and featured on websites and in spinoff stories. Noteworthy were radio interviews with *NPR* and *American Farm Country Radio* and color spreads in *Gardens West* and *Washington Gardener*. In addition, two "Science Matters" columns were contributed to *Horticulture Magazine* (circulation 157,688). Confirmed full page reads for the 12 press releases ranged from 997 to 2505 each, while headline impressions on the Web ranged as high as 176,349. An agricultural trade publication and a garden magazine are now among our regular followers on Twitter.

Examples of the many media contacting the PA Committee for further information and/or carrying WSSA PA Committee press release content in 2010 include: AboutWeeds.info; AG Exec; AG Professional; AgriMarketing; Agro News Update; AllVoices Global News; ABC online; AppleGrove.com; Arkansas AgFax; Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station News; AskFamillys.com; ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service; Barn OnAir and Online; Benzinga; BetaHealth Blog; Bismarck Farm & Ranch Guide; Bismarck Tribune; BNA; Bumpers College (Ark.); Center for Turf Grass Science; Connecticut Post; ContraCosta Times; Corn and Soybean Digest; Cornell University Extension; Earth Times; Eco Factory; Eldorado (Arkansas) News-Times; Encyclopedia.com; Enterprise Post; Environment News Service; Environment Press Release Junction; Environmental Protection Online; Farm and Ranch Guide; Farm Business Communications; Farm Futures; Farm Progress; Farmers Advance; Farmers and Planters; Farms.com; Fast News Track; Garden for Nutrition; Gardens West; Green Talk; Greenhouse Canada; Growing Produce; Hay and Forage; HerbalWeed.org; High Beam; High Plains Journal; Hobby Farms; Horticulture; ICanGarden.com; Illinois Agrinews; Indiana Prairie Farmer; i-Newswire; INHS Library News; Inside Bay Area; Pegasus Publications (producer of three garden publications and a radio show in Canada); Invasive Vegetation Management Facebook Page; Iowa Farm Bureau Press; Iowa Farmer Today; IScanMyFood.com; Issue Wire.com; Karen Alley's Facebook Page (a garden editor); Lancaster Farming; Lawn and Garden Magic; Midwest Producer; Miller-McCune Magazine; MSU Spotlight; MWCA Library News; Naked News (Bloomberg); New Mexico State University News Center; News Guide; Northern Plains Sustainable Ag; No-Till Farmer; NPR "You Bet Your Garden"; Ohio Farmer; Penn State Live; Pennsylvania Farm Country Radio/American Farm Country Radio; PestHomeCom on Twitter; Philadelphia Examiner; Plant Management Network; Poisonous Plants; Pool and Yard Care; Precision Ag; Precision Pays; Red Orbit; Reference.com; Reno Gazette-Journal; Seed Quest; Seed Today; SeedQuest.com; Seeds; Sky Newswire; SouthernStates.com; SprayerGuide.com; StoptheWeeds.com; Street Insider; Sugar Producer; Texas Gardener; The Grower; Timber Frog.com; Topix.net; University of Arkansas newsletter; University of California ARN Employee Newsletter; University of California Cooperative Extension; University of Nevada News; USDA ARS Online; USDA National AgroForestry Center Online; Wallace's

Farmer; Washington (D.C.) Gardener; Washington State University CAHNRS News; Western Farm Press; Wiki Answers; World News; World News blog; and Yahoo News.

The 2010 press releases addressed a wide range of topics that were of membership (M) interest, of educational (E) value to a wide audience, or were related to policy issues (P). Many served more than one purpose.

PLANT LIFE ON PANDORA (February 1, 2010)	M	E	
WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA'S ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM (March 1, 2010)	M		
NEW APPLICATION TECHNOLOGIES KEEP HERBICIDES WHERE THEY BELONG (March 17, 2010)	M	E	
WEEDS ACROSS BORDERS: CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-COUNTRY COLLABORATION TO HALT THE SPREAD OF WEEDS (April 19, 2010)	M		P
WSSA ISSUES STRONG APPEAL TO USDA FOR RESTORATION OF FUNDING FOR WEED SCIENCE (May 12, 2010)	M		P
THE BATTLE TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE (June 28, 2010)	M	E	
THE DEADLY PROBLEM OF POISONOUS WEEDS (July 26, 2010)	M	E	
NEW WEBSITE PROVIDES A CENTRAL RESOURCE FOR INFORMATION ON PESTICIDE STEWARDSHIP (August 11, 2010)	M	E	
51ST ANNUAL MEETING OF WSSA TO FOCUS ON LATEST IN WEED CONTROL RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (September 28, 2010)	M		
SCIENTISTS PURSUE NEW SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES FOR WEED CONTROL IN ORGANIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS (October 19, 2010)	M	E	
CRANBERRY CROPS THRIVE WITH EFFECTIVE WEED CONTROL (November 2, 2010)	M	E	
50-YEAR WAR AGAINST WITCHWEED MAY BE NEARING ITS FINAL SKIRMISH (December 7, 2010)	M	E	

What is the current state of the committee's projects and activities?

The PA Committee is currently working on a press release related to no-till and preparing for student activities at the upcoming WSSA Meeting.

## **2011 Plan for Committee Activities**

Goals for 2011:

-Develop an outreach plan and materials, as prioritized by the Policy Board, for their use in increasing weed awareness with the new administration and other government officials.

-Develop an ambassador program utilizing WSSA committee members and experts from IPM Centers and Extension to enhance public awareness of weeds and to support our public outreach.

-Develop and implement a broader outreach strategy on promoting the topic of weeds through radio, TV, Web, UTube and magazines.

-Develop a Weed Fact Sheet for use in outreach.

-Proposed press release topic areas include:

1) *Allelopathic plants*

2) *Aquatic weed management*

3) *Carbon sequestration – the critical role of weed control*

4) *Challenges of non-chemical weed control*

5) *Characteristics of a good biofuel crop*

6) *Critical role of weed control in sustainable agriculture*

7) *Economic benefits of weed control*

8) *Economic losses due to weeds*

9) *Farm Bill impacts on weed research and management*

10) *Herbicide stewardship*

11) *Homeowner weed challenges*

12) *Human health issues/allergies*

13) *Invasive algae*

14) *Invasive species impact on endangered species*

15) *Key weed science research grants*

16) *Potential impacts of climate change on weed management*

17) *Protection of natural habitat/biodiversity*

18) *Research topics of interest from regional or national weed science meetings*

19) *Tillage/carbon footprint*

20) *Tillage/erosion*

21) *Urban/school weed challenges*

22) *Weed management in biofuel crop production*

23) *Weed resistance management*

24) *Weed Science and Weed Technology journal updates, in summary format*

25) *Weed seed banks*

26) *Weeds in wildflower mixes*

27) *Why Join the Weed Science Society of America*

28) *WSSA Academic Subject Matter Expert*

29) *WSSA and regional meetings – meeting details*

30) *WSSA award winners*

Plan of Action: Promote student interest in weed science at upcoming WSSA meeting; conduct biweekly committee work teleconferences; solicit WSSA members to draft press releases; produce educational and other press releases. More details are included in the Strategic Plan.

What is needed to further the goals of the committee/project? Informative and timely press release topics and contact name(s) submitted on an ongoing basis by WSSA members.

**Recommendations for Board/Society Action:**

Funds requested for 2011: \$18,000 from the Board for the Weed Science Subject Matter Liaison to the EPA and \$19,000 to achieve public awareness goals. This represents a flat budget compared to 2010. We will try to match the Board's resources by raising funds through the sustaining members and will provide an update at the summer board meeting.

Other requests for the Board: Assist the PA Committee by 1) soliciting ideas for raising awareness of weeds from the membership and committees, 2) identifying volunteers to draft press releases and other information, 3) sending a letter soliciting funds for public awareness outreach, and 4) further strengthening the interactions between the Public Awareness Committee and other WSSA committees, especially the Professional Development Committee, with the goal of engaging broader member participation, especially by students.