



**For Immediate Release**

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**Top Student Weed Scientists Recognized during First WeedOlympics**

**LAWRENCE, KANSAS** – August 29, 2011 – University students from Guelph, Ohio State, Purdue and Virginia Tech took top honors in the recent WeedOlympics, an event recognizing the best student weed scientists in North America.

The July 26-27 event on the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville was open to student members of the Northeastern, North Central, Southern and Western Weed Science Societies. This is the first year all the regional societies have combined efforts to sponsor a competition.

About 150 individuals participated in a variety of events – from identifying weeds and calibrating sprayers to solving weed management problems likely to be encountered on the job.

“We had students from as far north as Ontario, as far south as Florida and as far west as Washington State and New Mexico,” said Jim Brosnan, Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and co-host of this year’s event.

The students competed both as individuals and as teams. **Purdue University** took top honors at the graduate school level with a team that included Chad Barbham, Paul Marquardt, Jared Roskamp and Ryan Terry. **Guelph University** won at the undergraduate level with team members Jessica Gal, Thomas Judd, Adam Parker and Michael Vanhie.

Individual winners were Jason Parrish, a graduate student at **Ohio State University**, and Dan Tekiela, an undergraduate student at **Virginia Tech**.

Regional awards were also presented to individuals and teams from each of the four weed science societies.

- *Western Society of Weed Science*. A graduate-level team from **Washington State University** took top regional division honors (Jared Bell, Nevin Lawrence, Misha Manuchehri and Alan Raeder). First place at the undergraduate level went to a **New Mexico State University** team that included Heather Bedale, Joni Blount, Andy Dyer and Drew Garnett. Individual winners were J.D. Riffel of **Kansas State University** (graduate) and Joni Blount of **New Mexico State University** (undergraduate).
- *Northeastern Weed Science Society*. A team from **North Carolina State University** took top graduate-level honors for the division. Members were Bill Foote, Dustin Lewis and Stephen Meyers. Canada's **University of Guelph** took top undergraduate honors with a team that included Jessica Gal, Thomas Judd, Adam Parker and Michael Vanhie. Individual winners were Dan Tekiela of **Virginia Tech** (undergraduate) and Dustin Lewis of **North Carolina State University** (graduate).
- *North Central Weed Science Society*. A team from **Ohio State** took top honors at the undergraduate level (Samantha Konkle, Beverly Lennartz, Jason Rethman and Christine Shannon), while **Purdue University** took top honors at the graduate level (Chad Brabham, Paul Marquardt, Jared Roskamp and Ryan Terry). Individual winners with the best overall scores were Jason Parrish of **Ohio State University** (graduate level) and Michelle Shepherd (undergraduate level), also of **Ohio State**.
- *Southern Weed Science Society*. A team from the **University of Arkansas** took top honors for the region (Brent Johnson, Sandeep Rana, Reiofeli Salas and Josh Wilson). Sandeep Rana of the **University of Arkansas** also took first place at the individual level.

### About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit scientific society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems, and promotes cooperation among weed science organizations across the nation and around the world. For more information, visit [www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net).