



WSSA Committee Report

Committee Code and Name: E12, Public Awareness (PA) **Date:** 1-23-26

Board Liaison: Hilary Sandler

Committee Members for this year:

Name	Term Ending	Region/Affiliation	Name	Term Ending	Region/Affiliation
Chair: Bart Clewis		SWSS/WSSA	Ankit Yadav		WSSA (SMC, GSO)
Rebecca Fletcher		WSSA	Greg Dahl		WSSA
Mayank Malik		WSSA	Hilary Sandler	1/2026	WSSA (P)
Alyssa Calomeni Eck		AMPS	Amy Sullivan		GROW
Brett Miller		NCWSS	Benjamin Pritchard		SWSS
Neha Rana		NCWSS	Angela Karzmiarczyk	1/2027	NCWSS (VP)
Navdeep Godara	1/2026	WSSA (P, GSO)	Sudeep Mathew		NEWSS
Jesse Richardson		WSWS	Ethan Bertholet		CWSS
Lee Van Wychen		Ex Officio (Science Policy)	Gustavo Camargo Silva	1/2027	WSSA (VP, GSO)
Eric Gustafson		Ex Officio (Executive Secretary)	Kurt Vollmer		NEWSS
John Pocock		Ex Officio (Writer)	Fritz Koppatschek		NCWSS

Reviewed MOP for updates: No

Committee Actions/Impacts/Activities:

- **What were the committee’s goals for this year?**
 - Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact and effective management techniques
 - Bring attention to important weed control-related programs and challenges
 - Raise the visibility of WSSA and the weed science profession

- **List the committee’s accomplishments (through December 2025):**
 - We created and distributed 34 press releases (4 additional press releases posted directly to WSSA website) that span a wide range of topics of interest to our members, the broader industry, and the public. Highlights include meeting updates, student winners of 2025 regional and national weed contests, federal funding impacts on weed science, and emerging technologies for weed science. Each was:
 - Distributed online through the [Cision PRWeb](#) distribution service,
 - Distributed via Brevo to our custom list of more than 200 industry journalists and influencers,
 - Emailed to our WSSA members,
 - Promoted by our Public Awareness Committee members via social media and posted to the WSSA website
 - We identified a recipient of the WSSA Excellence in Journalism award, to be announced during WSSA’s annual meeting.

Press Releases by the Numbers: 2025*

Press Release	Date	Pickup	Views & Hits	Engagement	Multimedia
U.S. and Canadian Weed Scientists Convene for 2025 Annual Meetings	1/15/2025	519	1,683	72	406
Study Shows Seed Impact Mills Clobber Waterhemp Seed Viability	1/21/2025	162	4,963	255	976
National Pesticide Safety Education Month Spotlights Resources to Support Safe Pesticide Handling and Use	1/30/2025	504	2,633	402	250
WSSA Celebrates NAICC's Service to Agriculture Award for Bill Chism	2/4/2025	142	1,529	36	423
Topple Weeds with a PRE-POST Combo	2/18/2025	154	1,721	72	354
WSSA and CWSS Honor Award-Winning Scientists	3/19/2025	149	2,329	176	1,175
No Palmer Amaranth Tolerance is Advisable in Furrow-irrigated Rice	3/20/2025	140	1,352	50	1,118
Healthy Forests Require Combined Deer and Invasive Shrub Control	4/1/2025	484	1,228	46	1,176
WSSA Regional Affiliates Honor Outstanding Contributions in Weed Science	4/3/2025	415	2,109	133	1,470
Spray Drones Prove Effective for Crabgrass Management in Turf	4/8/2025	498	1,627	63	1,254
Native Plant Month Highlights Invasive Species Management Needs	4/16/2025	499	1,973	242	1,363
WSSA Unveils its Weed Management Priorities Amid Concerning Federal Cost Cuts to Agriculture Research	5/28/2025	20	4,487	83	1,233
WSSA-NAISF Invasive Species Forum Connects 200-Plus Participants	6/10/2025	138	1,270	86	1,169
WSSA Members Provide Expertise at Agrotechnology Meeting	6/12/2025	143	1,841	67	1,418
WSSA Applauds Peter Sikkema for Canadian Ag Hall of Fame Selection	7/1/2025	138	1,335	25	1,187
Drone Herbicide Applications Prove Effective for Common Reed Control	7/10/2025	142	1,849	70	1,197
Weed Zapping Event Draws Spotlight	7/15/2025	153	1,325	119	1,383
Electric Weed Control Proves Shockingly Effective	7/17/2025	144	2,041	149	1,231
WSSA Town Hall Facilitates Member Interactions	7/30/2025	138	1,078	77	1,085
WSSA and APMS Leaders Strategize to Thwart Hydrilla and Harmful Algae Blooms	7/31/2025	124	1,236	106	1,254
WSSA Unveils 2025 Student Competition Award Winners	8/21/2025	141	1,437	12	1,289
WSSA Expresses Opposition to ARS Lab Closures, Downsizing	8/28/2025	150	1,271	106	1,033
Fall-applied Residuals Repel Resistant Italian Ryegrass	9/16/2025	137	2,675	158	746
WSSA and APMS Urge Army Corps for Renewed Aquatic Plant Control Program Funding	9/18/2025	145	2,370	59	52,657
WSSA Member Scientists Access Airwaves to Share Weed Control Expertise	10/2/2025	157	1,731	305	961
WSSA and NAICC Provide On-Farm Learning for Agency Representatives	10/7/2025	142	1,382	205	1,158
Research Shows Waterhemp Resistance Can Evolve from Preemergent PPO Inhibitor Use	10/23/2025	139	2,146	78	1,303
Two WSSA Affiliates Offer Research Updates at Upcoming Annual Meetings	10/28/2025	139	1,577	1,068	2,534
Don't Delay Weed Control Decisions until Spring	11/18/2025	148	920	69	11,620
WSSA Survey Shows an Urgent Need for New Weed Control Strategies	11/25/2025	132	1,287	148	11,894
WSSA and Regional Affiliates Invite Participants to Attend Annual Meetings	12/3/2025	131	1,481	3,027	19,356
Electric Current Stymies Tall Fescue Seedheads	12/16/2025	151	3,460	4,810	17,808
WSSA Commends New Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Project	12/23/2025	168	4,088	8,631	19,893
Average		203	1983	637	4951

*Four additional WSSA press releases were posted in 2025 on the WSSA website but not distributed via PR Newswire (or were distributed with no data collected).

SUMMARY – WSSA PRESS RELEASES BY THE NUMBERS: 2025

Report date range	2025-01-01 to 2025-12-31
Total Press Releases	34
Total Potential Audience	2,317,010,489
Total Views/Hits*	81,500
Total Media Pickups*	6,814
Total Engagement Actions*	24,700
Total Multimedia Views & Hits*	165,230

***Definitions:**

- **Potential Audience** -- estimated audience reach, based on aggregated data from all media outlets that published the release
- **Views/Hits** -- actual number of views and web crawler hits the release received on the PRNewswire websites and online network
- **Media Pickups** -- represents all relevant media placements around your content, consisting of exact match pickup from the online syndication.
- **Engagement** -- total number of times audiences engaged with your content on PRNewswire websites over the last 365 days

- **What information was posted on the WSSA website?**

- Our 34 press releases were posted to the [press section of the WSSA website](#), including an article on student winners of enrichment program awards.

- **How much funds were requested? How much was spent?**

- **2025 Request:** \$16,000
- **2025 Non-Journal Expenditures:** \$

- **What was the impact of the committee activities/accomplishments on the following: membership, publication, policy, legislation, and/or education?**

Our press releases and other outreach initiatives have raised the visibility of WSSA, its members, weed science and weed-related issues among readers of a wide range of industry trades, newspapers and online media.

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

- Current press releases in 2026:
 - *Smart Sprayer Study Confirms AI's Cost-Cutting Capabilities – 1/21/26 (WS)*
 - *In Review - National Pesticide Safety Education Month – Joint PR with Entomology and Plant Pathology for PSEPs <https://pesticidestewardship.org/national-pesticide-safety-education-month/> - 1/27/26*
 - *(Feb 2026) ESA video with Stanley Culpepper and Bill Chism – highlight their work for CLA. Videos on CLA website.*
 - *(Early 2026) Giant hogweed impacts – Melissa Bravo, (Rutgers Coop. Extension). bravomelissa@yahoo.com Agronomist and Livestock Herd Health Specialist/ Meadow Lake Farm consulting Services. Need contact information for John.*
 - *After WSSA meeting: (Feb 2026) Highlight winners for 2026 WSSA (Ian Burke), NEWSS, NCWSS meeting.*
 - *After WSSA meeting: (Feb 2026) Nathan Boyd, Greg, Hilary – contacts for new Emerging Technologies Committee*
 - *(Mar 2026) WWSS and SWSS moved to Mar 8-12 winners.*
 - *After WSSA meeting: (Feb 2026) Highlight Excellence in Journalism winners after WSSA meeting*
 - *(Feb 2026) CAST issue – Wildfires and Invasive species – Greg has detail (NAISMA – Matt Baur/ John Wallace (PSU))*

- (Mar 2026) WWSS and SWSS moved to Mar 8-12 winners.
- (Mar 2026) CAST issue – Wildfires and Invasive species – Greg has detail (NAISMA – Matt Baur/ John Wallace (PSU))
- (Mar 2026) Giant hogweed impacts – Melissa Bravo, (Rutgers Coop. Extension). *bravomelissa@yahoo.com* Agronomist and Livestock Herd Health Specialist/ Meadow Lake Farm consulting Services. Need contact information for John.
- (Mar2026) Precision technology article with mention of MAHA and regenerative farming pilot project, risk management, effects on state’s legislation potential. Statement for release on policy page of WSSA with potential to link back with future article. – Lee and Hilary to follow up. Is there a good weed science angle for an article. Weed management links to regenerative ag success. Follow up with Lee.
- (Apr 2026) – Patrick Tranel (Illinois), Techniques (modelling) to delay weed resistance. *Amaranth sp* work.
- There are several topics in our 2026 brainstorming section and distant ideas on hold that likely will be rolled out later in 2026.
- Other more distant ideas are in the “parking lot” of each WSSA PAC agenda.

Committee Meeting Schedule: (Include all planned meeting dates and times): Meet every 2 weeks on Thursdays @ 1PM EST

2026 Plan for Committee Activities

- Increase public awareness of weeds, their impact and effective management techniques
- Bring attention to important weed control programs and challenges
- Raise the visibility of WSSA and the weed science profession
- Plan of Action:
 - Continue meeting every two weeks by teleconference to plan press releases, fact sheets and other public awareness initiatives.
 - Continue to increase our social media presence.
 - Continue to identify and act on emerging issues.
 - Engage with Herbicide Resistance Education Committee, GROW and “Take Action” commodity group committees to align messaging related to herbicide resistant weeds.
 - Continue to work with Science Policy and Weed Loss committees to publicize weed survey results as well as highlight weed impacts on crop yields.

Budget needs:

- \$22,000 for Public Awareness initiatives

Areas for improvement/concerns:

- We have several committee members that have not been active this year due to other commitments. Recommend finding replacements that can be more active.
- Will look to change meeting day and/or timing to accommodate more members if needed.