



# WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY of AMERICA

RESEARCH - EDUCATION - INNOVATION  
FOUNDED 1956

## WSSA Committee Report

**COMMITTEE: I1 (formerly W1)**

**Date:** 23 January 2026

**Program Committee, Hilary Sandler, Chair**

**BOARD LIAISON:** n/a

**Include in Consent Agenda:**  Yes (no discussion needed, just informational update)

**XX No** (items in report require discussion or action)

**NOTE:** Sandler notes that although there is a significant gap for the submission of Program Reports on the WSSA website, it was deemed prudent to capture our experience with Confex. This report was written and submitted about one year after the 2025 Vancouver meeting.

<b>I1 Program Committee</b>		
<i>Chair and Vice Chair are President-elect (B3) and Vice-President (B4), respectively, plus Section Chairpersons; ex-off: Local Arrangements Committee Chair and Executive Secretary(B19)</i>		
Sandler, Hilary		B3
Burke, Ian		B4
Clements, David		Local Arrangements Chair
Gustafson, Eric	Ex-off	B19
<b>Section</b>	<b>Section Chair 2025</b>	<b>Section Vice-Chair 2025</b>
1. Agronomic Crops	Scott Nolte	Laura Smith
2. Horticultural Crops	Thierry Besançon	Jichul Bae
3. Turf and Ornamentals	Hannah Wright	n/a
4. Pasture, Range, Forest, & Rights of ways, and Wildlands	Zachary Howard	n/a
5. Aquatic Invasive Plants	Andrew Howell	Dave Clements
6. Regulatory Aspects	Bianca Martins	Leo Galindo-Gonzalez
7. Teaching and Extension	Joe Ikley	n/a
8. Formulation, Adjuvant, & Application Technology	Peter Berry	Cody Chytyk
9. Weed Biology and Ecology	Sarah Kezar	Marie-Josée Simard
10. Biocontrol of Weeds	Marcelo Moretti	Alida Janmaat
11. Physiology	Carlos Rigon	Eric Page
12. Soil and Env Aspects	Bill Chism	TBD
13. Integrated Weed Management	Ian Burke	Dilshan Benaragama
14. Targeted and Autonomous	Lauren Lazaro	Shaun Sharpe
15. Genomics	Jake Montgomery	Martin LaForest
16. Sustaining Member Exhibits	Kyle Kepner	n/a
17. Poster Sessions	Lovreet Shergill	Vanessa Jones, Virginia Oeggerli
18. Student Contest	Darrin Dodds	Breanne Tidemann
19. Student Travel Enrichment Experience	Cara McCauley	n/a

Reviewed MOP for updates:     YES                      **XX NO**

Comments re: MOP: None

**Committee Actions/Impacts/Activities:**

A suggestion was made by G. Dahl to consider other software platforms for handling title, abstract and program production for the Annual Meeting. This was based on experiences that the current system (Apex by Kruger) was limited to use on computers without certain firewalls (such as personal computer, maybe university, etc.). As a result, the previous Program Chair had to buy a new laptop to install the program (Dahl was industry). There were concerns that if Mr. Kruger became unavailable, our ability to adequately use the system might be compromised. It was thought that using a web-based system would allow easier access for more people (future Program Chairs) to conduct the Society's business for developing the program for the Annual Meeting.

Four vendors were identified and asked to give a presentation to an *ad hoc* committee consisting of WSSA Presidents and regional presidents, Darren Dodds and Eric Gustafson. We heard presentations from C-vent, Cadmium, Catalyst, and Confex during April-May 2025. Dawn Refsell and Eric G. collated the information from each company into a spreadsheet. We chose to engage Confex as they seemed to offer what we needed (and perhaps some growth) for the best price (ca \$45K for the year). The Board approved engaging Confex; it was decided that WSSA would bear the burden of the cost in the initial year (2025), with the intent to have the regionals contribute in Year 2. The representatives from Confex were Radhika Mehendale and Mathias Balhorn. We received training from Gus Lavallee, Project Manager, in late August-early September 2025. The timing was not optimal as North Central needed to "get on line ASAP" to get their meeting organized.

The bottom line was that all the regionals, affiliates (except CWSS) and WSSA had incredibly negative experiences with Confex. The problems were too numerous to list them all but included poor customer support, no iterative learning on what we needed (it always seemed like Confex was dealing with a "new" problem) despite all of us asking Confex to address the same issue, the export features required much editing, the platform was not user-friendly, and downloading the ppt and posters (especially for the judges) was difficult (we had to rely on Confex to do it for us).

The suite of 2024-2025 Program Chairs held a de-briefing in March 2025 following the WSSA annual meeting. It was decided to (recommend to the Board to) terminate our relationship with Confex and investigate Fourwaves, a company that CWSS has been using and has had positive experiences.

An estimated 353 people were registered for the meeting for WSSA and approximately 135 people registered separately for CWSS. Two new sections were added to the meeting program, "Targeted and Autonomous Weed Control Strategies" and "Genomics". The Committees were re-numbered based on these additions (they became #14 and #15, respectively). 408 total presentations were listed in the program, with 175 of those as posters. Symposia information is in the W2 report from 2025.

After the conclusion of the Vancouver meeting, Sandler collated the abstracts that were presented at the meeting and sent a PDF to Eric G for posting on the WSSA website.

**Committee Meeting Schedule\*:** (Include all planned meeting dates and times): Most of our meetings revolved around dealing with Confex and were sporadic.

**Budget needs:** We had the cost of using the Confex system, plus other typical meeting expenses (see Fin Com).

**Areas for improvement/concerns:** Do not re-hire Confex and seek alternative (e.g., Fourwaves).

The next chair should try to engage Section Chairs early in the planning and get them to have more "buy-in" with the process of getting talks for their sections.

**Opportunities for future (symposia, speakers, communication, general):** Symposia are vetted through a proposal submission and selection process, which seems to be working well.

\*This will be visible to all members for engagement.