



# WEED SCIENCE SOCIETY of AMERICA

RESEARCH - EDUCATION - INNOVATION  
FOUNDED 1956

## Newsletter

Volume 53, No. 4  
January, 2026



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Best Wishes for a Good New Year from Massachusetts!

As we enter the heart of the winter season, many of us are distilling our data and work efforts from the past season and making plans for the upcoming field season. Extension folks are hosting winter training sessions and researchers are creating new protocols. Concurrent with this hope for the future, I feel it is very important to acknowledge that it has been a tough year for many of

our members. Many of us had to make or may need to make tough financial decisions due to the impact of reduced federal funding on many of our programs and workplaces. Our members in the Federal government are still adjusting to varied scenarios including reduced work forces, altered program priorities, relocations, or seeking new career opportunities. Students have experienced various levels of insecurity regarding program support and travel. Those in industry have also faced realignments and many have been impacted on a personal level. As we navigate our way through some unstable times, I hope you will be able to keep your focus on the good work you do as weed scientists. The new strategies and tools that we discover and develop are critical to farmers across the country, as they try to manage their weed issues. My best wishes to all our members as we continue to pursue excellence and develop new tools to manage weeds.

Ian Burke, along with his Local Arrangements Committee (LAC), have put together a great program for WSSA in Raleigh, North Carolina, February 9–12, 2026. Please note that there are multiple planned activities for Thursday! Please adjust your travel plans accordingly. There will be multiple opportunities for offsite tours, including visits to Syngenta, BASF, and Cotton Incorporated facilities. See page 4 for more information from the LAC.

We have many changes occurring at the Board level and I want to note the outgoing and incoming! Mark Vangessel is ending his service as our EPA Liaison. We thank Mark for his multiple years representing WSSA to EPA and providing expertise and guidance to all things weed science. Many thanks to Jill Schroeder for her many years of capably representing WSSA at the CAST meetings. John Wallace will be our new CAST representative. Our NIFA liaisons, Jim Kells (outgoing) and Todd Baughman (incoming), have been patiently waiting for communication channels to re-establish. We thank Jim for his years of service representing

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**WSSA**  
**Annual Meeting**  
February 9–12, 2026 • Raleigh, NC

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WSSA at NIFA and we look forward to Todd's efforts with this Federal agency. Janis McFarland is stepping down as Chair of the Science Policy Committee. This is a very active and robust committee and we thank Janis for her steady hand at leading this important committee for WSSA. John Lindquist is stepping down as Chair of the Constitution and Operating Procedures Committee. John has done a fabulous job keeping us on task for Robert's Rules of Order and for making many edits to the MOPs. We are currently in the process of selecting a new SPC Chair, EPA Liaison, and Constitution Chair and hope to have candidates finalized by the Raleigh meeting; please check our next newsletter for updates. For the new arrivals to the Board, we thank you for being willing to give service to WSSA and look forward to your constructive contributions.

Thanks to the Regional Societies who welcomed me at their annual meetings. It was a fantastic experience for me to visit Western, Canadian, and North Central; everyone made me feel incredibly welcomed. I will visit my home regional (Northeast) as the new year starts; I will be at Southern when this newsletter hits the press. Each region has its own flavor but the one constant is the high caliber of presentations, posters, and symposia. Great job to all!

I have been honored to serve as your President for the past year. I have been truly impressed by the dedication and passion demonstrated by so many of our members. As an all-volunteer group, I am continually impressed by the discovery, development, and work that goes on in WSSA. As President, I had the pleasure to inform the award winners of their honors, bestowed upon them by their peers! I hope you will join me at the General Session in Raleigh to acknowledge the excellence that has become a hallmark of WSSA.

Looking back on the year, we have supported weed science and WSSA on many levels. We published a Science Policy Priorities paper ([WSSA Flyer final](#)), which we distributed to many legislators on Capitol Hill during the Fly-In event. We responded to many Federal actions by writing our own letters and/or joining our pest management colleagues on issues that were cross-disciplinary. We held our first virtual Town Hall, specifically to hear from YOU about your concerns and get your feedback. We produced a new Financial Strategic Plan to ensure that we remain good financial guardians of the Society's resources. We selected a new logo to represent WSSA. We started the Past Presidents Panel to capitalize on the deep reservoir of experience and expertise to help guide us "newbies." We also made significant updates to the MOPs (Manual of Operating Procedures) and much work was done to update the committee lists and to align the MOPs with the committee list; this is always a work in progress. I am proud of the work we have done but there is always more to do to keep WSSA "on message" and attending to the many issues that impact Weed Science.

I have been blessed to be working with a fantastic board. Thanks to Greg Dahl (Past President), Ian Burke (President Elect), and Dawn Refsell (Vice President) for your guidance, feedback and support. I am grateful for the work of Secretary Kelly Backscheider, Treasurer Lauren Lazaro, Chris Willenborg and Sarah Ward (Co-Director of Publications), John Lindquist (Chair, Constitution and Operations), Michael Flessner and Christy Sprague (Members-at-Large), and Navdeep Godara (Graduate Student Representative). The regionals are well represented by Steve Pyle (Northeast), Peter Dotray (Southern), Erin Burns (North Central), Alan Helm (Western), Charles Geddes (Canadian), and Andrew Howell (Aquatics). They all work hard to represent you! Our liaison board positions include Jill Schroeder (CAST), Mark Vangessel (EPA), and Todd Baughman (NIFA); thank you for your expertise! Special shoutouts to our new Regulatory Consultant Bill Chism, our Executive Director of Science Policy Lee Van Wyche and our Executive Secretary Eric Gustafson. Please always reach out to the Board with your concerns, questions, and comments. We rely on your feedback to keep WSSA vibrant and relevant.

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## WSSA FUTURE MEETING SITES AND DATES

February 9–12, 2026  
WSSA Annual Meeting  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
Ian Burke, Program Chair  
[www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net)

WSSA HOME PAGE  
ACCESSED AT:  
[www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net)

THINK NEWSLETTER  
Deadline for April issue  
March 1, 2026

SEND NEWSLETTER  
MATERIAL TO:  
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## WSSA NEWSLETTER

VOL. 53, NO. 4 JANUARY, 2026  
Published quarterly by the Weed  
Science Society of America. Subscrip-  
tion included in the annual dues paid  
by members of the Society. Address  
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# NEWSS Annual Meeting Held in Hershey, PA

The annual meeting of the Northeast Weed Science Society (NEWSS) was held in Hershey, Pennsylvania (January 5–8), bringing together researchers, extension specialists, industry representatives, and students from across the northeastern United States and beyond. The meeting provided an important forum for sharing the latest research findings, discussing emerging weed management challenges, and fostering collaboration among members. A total of **101 participants** attended the meeting. The scientific program included **45 oral papers** and **36 poster presentations**, of which **20 papers** and **20 posters** were entered into the student contest, highlighting the depth and quality of student re-

search within NEWSS. In addition to the technical sessions, the meeting featured opportunities for professional development and networking.

Annual merit awardees included: Daniel Kunkel (Amvac, NEWSS Fellow), Roger Batts (IR-4, Award of Merit), Matt Cutulle (Clemson, Outstanding Educator), Vipin Kumar (Cornell, Outstanding Researcher), Juan Romero (Virginia Tech, Robert D. Sweet Outstanding Graduate Student – MS), Navdeep Godara (Virginia Tech, Robert D. Sweet Outstanding Graduate Student – PhD), and Larissa Smith (M. Garry Schnappinger Service Recognition). Student paper award winners included: Grant Hoffer (Penn State, Honorable Mention), Jackson

Alsdorf (NC State, Third Place), Akashdeep Singh Brar (Virginia Tech, Second Place), and Laurel Wellman (Penn State, First Place). Student poster award winners included: Colden Bradshaw (NC State, Second Place) and Brock Dean (NC State, First Place). Writing contest awardees included: Rebecca Stup and Nazir Adam Sharifi (Cornell, Second and First Place, MS), Midhat Tugoo (Cornell, Second Place, PhD), and Akashdeep Singh Brar (Virginia Tech, First Place, PhD). The next NEWSS meeting will be held jointly with the North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS) in Columbus, Ohio, in December.

Submitted by Lynn Sosnoskie

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Last, but absolutely not least, a big Thank You to all our WSSA members for your support and guidance; your participation is key! Our Society is as great as it is because of members like you. Please feel free to reach out to me, Eric Gustafson, and Lee Van Wychen if you have any questions, concerns, or comments regarding the activities of WSSA.

Kindest Regards,  
Hilary Sandler  
WSSA President

## Herbicide Resistance Education Committee at WSSA annual meeting

Herbicide Resistance Education Committee E12b is planning an in-person meeting at the WSSA annual meeting! We welcome anyone who is interested in the activities of this committee to join us. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for a two-hour discussion on Monday, 8:00–10:00 AM in the Capital Room. Please consult the program for time and place! Tentative agenda items include a few updates and a discussion around next steps and the future directions for the committee. Please come and engage in our discussion!

Jill Schroeder  
E12b Chair

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# **WSSA Annual Meeting Information**

## ***from the Local Arrangements Committee***

The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) annual meeting will be held at the Crabtree Valley Marriott in Raleigh, North Carolina. Located in Crabtree Valley, the hotel is adjacent to Crabtree Valley Mall as well as an easy ride to downtown Raleigh. Our Pre-Conference tour is an opportunity to visit the Syn-genta facilities in Goldsboro, NC and is scheduled for Monday from 7:00 AM-2:00 PM. There are three Post-Conference tours being offered. They are 1) a tour of Cotton Incorporated, 2) a tour of local BASF research facilities and 3) an opportunity to explore the North Carolina Museum of Natural History. All are Thursday, 1:00-5:00 PM.

The General Session will begin at 4:15 PM Monday, February 24, 2026. We are proud to announce that our Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Garey Fox, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and a biological systems engineer at North Carolina State University. President Hilary Sandler will present the Presidential Address, followed by the presentation of our annual awards. A food-and-drink reception will follow to celebrate our award winners.

Tuesday night dinner can include restaurants in the Glenwood Avenue area through a one-way bus ride starting at the hotel at 6:00 PM. Partici-

pants will have to arrange their own ride home, but access to an array of restaurants in the downtown area will be much easier.

As always, our meeting is geared towards our students. Students are invited to join in a night of golf games at the Drive Shack; pre-registration is required. On Tuesday from Noon to 1:30 PM, we will host a Student Lunch and Business Meeting, which will feature a presentation: a roundtable discussion focusing on “Careers for Weed Science Graduate Students in Emerging Ag-Tech and Startups.” A large contingent (152!) of students have entered to compete in either the Single Slide Talk (SST) or the poster contest. The contests will start on Tuesday afternoon with the SST finals to be held on Wednesday morning at 8:30 AM. A special workshop on “Scientific Writing” is open to all students and will be held on Wednesday starting at 3:30 PM. Announcements of the contest winners will be made at the Student/Photos Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, starting at 5:30 PM.

The Women in Weed Science Networking Event will be held on Monday from 2:00-3:30 PM. We hope you will join us early Wednesday morning for a 5K Puff Run/Walk through on the nearby

Raleigh Greenway. Please assemble at 6:45 AM; the run/walk will start at 7:00 AM. Join us for our Poster Sessions; authors will be with their posters on either Tuesday (odd numbers) or Wednesday (even numbers) morning. We will be offering three symposia during the annual meeting. Things kick off on Tuesday morning (9:00 AM-12:00 PM) with “Bridging the Gap: Regulatory, Technical, and Industry Perspectives on Targeted and Autonomous Weed Control” organized by Lauren Lazaro. Tuesday afternoon (1:00-5:00 PM), we will offer “Re-framing the Discussion of Herbicide Resistance – Perspectives on Best Practices for Real-time Management in the Field,” organized by Charles Cahoon, Cameron Douglass, and Sarah Lancaster. We will conclude our symposia offerings on Wednesday morning (9:00-11:00 AM) with “The Herbicide Resistance Action Committee”, organized by the Herbicide Resistance Action Committee (HRAC) in what will be a unique interactive poster symposium. Come prepared to engage with the HRAC on a diversity of topics in discussions of a diverse range of topics from the HRAC perspective.

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### **THINK NEWSLETTER**

**Deadline for April issue**  
**March 1, 2026**

# WASHINGTON REPORT

by Lee Van Wychen, Director of Science Policy

## SHUTDOWN OVER, BUT LOTS OF WORK TO DO

After 43 days, the longest government shutdown in U.S. history is finally over. The Senate voted 60 to 40 on November 10, followed by a 222 to 209 House vote on November 12, to reopen the federal government.

- The agreement includes three full-year (FY) 2026 appropriations bills covering Agriculture, Veterans Affairs, and Legislative Branch operations, also known as a “minibus.”
- All other agencies await their fate in the nine remaining appropriations bills, including EPA, Department of the Interior, NOAA, and the US Army Corp of Engineers. Current discussion on Capitol Hill indicates these nine remaining bills could be packaged in similar “minibuses.”
  - The remaining nine bills are funded under a continuing resolution (CR) through January 30, 2026 at FY 2025 levels.
  - Most of the nine remaining appropriations bills have been marked up by the House and Senate, but there is no conference agreement yet. This has implications for programs like the Army Corps of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control.

The agreement also contains a one-year Farm Bill extension keeping research, conservation, and market programs running through 2026. This is the third extension of the 2018 Farm Bill.

The USDA NIFA RFA submission process has remained open; however, many RFA deadlines were delayed. The new deadline for Pests and Beneficial Species is December 18, 2025.

- Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) charters for both the EPA Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) and the National Invasive Species Committee (NISC) Invasive Species Advisory Com-

mittee (ISAC) have lapsed during the shutdown.

- Those charters will need to be renewed
- No longer singles out glyphosate or atrazine.

## AG RESEARCH FUNDING—MIXED RESULTS, BUT EXTENSION AND INTEGRATED FUNDING REMAIN STEADY

The final FY 2026 appropriations bill for agriculture that funds USDA through September 30, 2026 was generally good news for ag research and extension programs, where level funding is considered a victory in the current budget conditions. USDA-ARS funding increased by \$5 million, while USDA-NIFA funding decreased \$10 million with most of that decrease coming from the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program. The best explanation for these differences between USDA-ARS and NIFA-AFRI is that members of Congress have tended to support ARS labs in their district where they know the money can be “Congressional-

ally directed.” This is compared to NIFA-AFRI competitive grants, which Congress supports in general due to the competitive aspect, but lacks any true champions on the Hill because no one knows where the grants will be awarded until later. Regardless, the NIFA AFRI grants program funding in FY 2010 was \$262 million and grew every year up until FY 2023 when it reached \$455 million. As the largest line item in the NIFA budget, AFRI is an easy target for appropriators to cut \$10 million from and move it elsewhere in the USDA budget in the current fiscal environment.

## WSSA AND NAICC TOUR OF ESA AND IPM ISSUES IN NC & VA ON SEPTEMBER 23–24

WSSA and the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) converged in Richmond, VA on September 22 to host a guided tour in VA and NC with special emphasis on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) along IPM practices. This was our second event of this type cohosting with the

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	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
	----- \$ Millions -----			
<b>USDA-ARS</b>	1,744	1,788	1,788	<b>1,793</b>
<b>USDA-NIFA – total</b>	1,701	1,679	1,687	<b>1,677</b>
<b>Research &amp; Education Activities</b>				
Hatch Act: Ag Experiment Stations	259	259	265	<b>265</b>
Ag & Food Research Initiative (AFRI)	455	445	445	<b>435</b>
IR-4: Minor crop use program	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
<b>Extension Activities</b>				
Smith-Lever 3(b) and 3(c): Extension	325	325	325	<b>325</b>
<b>Integrated Activities</b>				
Crop Protection & Pest Management	21	21	21	<b>21</b>

Appropriations for USDA-ARS and USDA-NIFA Research, Extension and Integrated programs for Fiscal Years (FY) 2023 through 2026.

## WASHINGTON REPORT CONTINUED from pg 5

NAICC. In 2024, WSSA and NAICC cohosted a tour on ESA issues for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff in Wisconsin.

Tour participants included scientists and professionals from EPA, FWS, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, pronounced “nymphs”). Representatives from WSSA included President Hilary Sandler; Bill Chism, Regulatory Consultant and ESA Committee Chair; Mark VanGessel, EPA Liaison; Lee Van Wychen, Executive Director of Science Policy; and Science Policy Fellows Aleah Butler-Jones from Cornell and Cole Woolard from Texas Tech.

The tours took place on September 23–24, 2025. On the first day, stops included Cedar Point Farms in Wakefield, VA, Tidewater Agronomics Research Farm in Belvedere, NC, and a peanut harvest on Lassiter Farms near Jackson, NC. After an overnight stay in Roanoke Rapids, NC, we toured Fisher Family Partnership in Whitakers, NC, where we saw tobacco and sweet potatoes and finished the tour at Mush Island Farms in Weldon, NC.

Virginia Tech and North Carolina State University Extension Specialists gave great presentations on a host of weed and pest management challenges. Other stakeholder groups participating in the tour included the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, North Carolina Peanut Growers and the North Carolina Cotton Growers.

As tour participants, we observed cotton, peanut, and tobacco crops along with associated conservation and crop protection practices. Experts discussed the benefits of cover crops, the process of adding them to a farm management program, and the challenges and limitations that they may pose. Speakers also highlighted the role that IPM plays in the ability to reduce pesticide use, improve soil health, reduce water runoff and improve biodiversity.

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From L to R: WSSA Tour Participants: Cole Woolard, Hilary Sandler, Lee Van Wychen, Aleah Butler-Jones, Mark VanGessel, and Bill Chism



A stop at Tidewater Agronomic Research Farms in Belvedere, NC, managed by Stan and Matt Winslow. We had 32 participants on the tour including nine from EPA, five from USFWS and 3 from NMPS. At each stop we also had various university experts, crop consultants, and/or farmers. Stan Winslow (sunhat and white shirt on top right) discusses crop scouting and the info they provide to growers. We also had Dr. Dominic Resig from NC State discuss field edge infesting insects like stinkbugs. They tend to be more prevalent along field edges to avoid treatment.



A hands on lesson sweeping insects at Tidewater Agronomics Research Farm and determining pests vs beneficials.



A peanut harvest near Jackson, NC on Lassiter Farms. It was the first time for many of us on the tour to witness a peanut harvest, which is a very dusty affair!



Stanley Culpepper (far right) and Charlie Cahoon (just out of the picture) addressed weed management and big picture issues in farming that will impact ESA implementation. This was at Mush Island Farms in Weldon, NC that was managed by Ellis Taylor. He was a top-notch farmer who worked hard to manage both the economics and conservation efforts on his farm. At the other end of this field is the Roanoke River, which is a Pesticide Use Limitation Area (PULA) for the Atlantic Sturgeon, an endangered species listed in 2012.

Despite the challenges ahead, connecting farmers, researchers and federal regulators during the tour was a tremendous benefit. It fostered meaningful individual and group interactions and everyone left with a greater understanding on how we must collaborate to provide food for the world profitably while protecting the environment for future generations. Plans are already underway to have another tour in 2026, location TBD. A special shoutout to our NAICC colleagues who were instrumental in pulling off the event; they were a fantastic group to work with!

**PLEASE VISIT THE WSSA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT WEBPAGE**

There is a lot of excellent summaries on EPA's Herbicide Strategy, Insecticide Strategy, Bulletins Live Two, and an Introduction to Pesticide Registration and the Endangered Species Act and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).  
<https://wssa.net/endangered-species/>

**EPA RELEASES MUCH IMPROVED VERSION OF THE PALM APP FOR DETERMINING RUNOFF AND DRIFT MITIGATIONS**

The EPA has released a mobile-friendly calculator designed to help pesticide applicators determine and document ESA label mitigations. The tool, called the Pesticide App for Label Mitigations (PALM), guides users through the same mitigation "menu" found on EPA labels and bulletins, then generates a field-level summary that can be saved or printed for records.

PALM is intended for use at the field or management-unit level and mirrors EPA's mitigation tables without requiring applicators to manually sort through them. After answering a series of questions, users receive the required spray-drift buffer distance or the number of runoff and erosion mitigation points, along with a list of practices that qualify.

**Spray Drift Buffer Calculator**

This sequence helps determine whether a buffer is required and what reduction options are available under the label. Users are asked if the product label references the EPA mitigation menu. If so, they enter the product and crop information, application type, boom height, droplet size, drift-reducing agents in the tank mix and whether managed areas exist downwind. The output is the buffer distance and any allowable reductions.

**Runoff and Erosion Mitigation Calculator**

This sequence calculates how many mitigation points are needed for a field or management unit and which practices can fulfill them. The EPA defines a management unit as a single, contiguous piece of land managed as one unit for a crop, which can be subdivided by crop type or by unique field features.

The runoff and erosion flow begins by identifying the field, product and crop. It screens for cases where mitigation points are not required, such as spot treatments covering fewer than 1,000 square feet or when a qualifying "managed area" exists within 1,000 feet down-gradient.

Examples of managed areas include agricultural fields, pastures, vegetated filter strips, grassed waterways, hedgerows, riparian zones, private forests, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) acres. Contained irrigation water sources, retention ponds and other runoff structures also qualify.

If mitigation is required, PALM walks users through a 12-step process to document label targets. Applicators input county and state information, slope and soil type, tillage and cover crop use, and conservation practices such as terraces, waterways and filter devices. Points are awarded for practices across three categories: in-field, field-adjacent and systems that capture

runoff. Additional points are given for using less than the maximum labeled rate of a pesticide. A final summary lists total points and the practices credited.

Both calculators end with a printable summary of answers and results for record keeping. EPA emphasizes that PALM is an aid for planning and documentation, not a substitute for following label directions or state regulations. Applicators are still responsible for meeting all requirements. The tool is available at: [www.epa.gov/pesticides/pesticide-app-label-mitigations](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pesticide-app-label-mitigations)

**SCIENCE POLICY FELLOWS VISIT DC – DISCUSS MANY WEED SCIENCE ISSUES**

On November 12–14, WSSA Science Policy Fellows Aleah Butler-Jones from Cornell and Cole Woolard from Texas Tech visited the nation's Capital to meet with their Senators and Congressmen from their home state. We also had a lengthy discussion with House Agriculture Committee staff on a number of topics including the availability of DJI drones for use in site-specific weed management.



As of December 2025, DJI drones aren't fully banned in the U.S., but a potential ban looms, with a December 23, 2025, deadline for a mandated security audit under the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that, if missed, triggers an automatic addition to the FCC's "Covered List,"

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blocking new imports and future software/network access due to national security concerns over Chinese ties.

Our main focus points for the state visits were on funding for the Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program and the IR-4 program, including the capacity funding for Smith Lever 3(b) and 3(c) and the Hatch Act programs. As noted above in the FY 2026 agriculture appropriations, we were happy to see all of those programs maintain level funding, especially in the current budget conditions.

Our visits also included meeting new science and government affairs staff at CropLife America as well as a meeting with the National Cotton Council of America and Cotton Incorporated. One of the hot button issues we discussed was the support for uniform federal pesticide labeling under FIFRA Section 24(b), which the six national and regional weed science societies support. The [Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act](#) reaffirms that only the EPA can set pesticide labeling and packaging requirements, preventing states from imposing conflicting rules. Recent actions in some states contradict EPA-approved pesticide labels, which creates regulatory inconsistency, disrupts commerce, and undermines public confidence in federal science-based regulation.

At the same time, we support state's rights to regulate pesticides under FIFRA Section 24(a) and 24(c). FIFRA Section 24(a) says that states can add their own rules for selling or using pesticides, as long as they don't contradict FIFRA. FIFRA Section 24(c) allows states to register a pesticide for a new use or a new product to solve a "special local need" not covered federally,

but it requires EPA review and approval and is only for use within that state.

Finally, we met with several staff members from the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, including the new Professional Staff member overseeing funding for the \$10 billion Army Corp of Engineers Civil Works (ACOE-CW) program. We focused specifically on funding for the ACOE-CW Aquatic Plant Control program. The program has received \$5 to \$7 million annually between 2018 to 2024, but did not receive any funding in FY 2025 because Congress did not pass an appropriations bill, nor did the ACOE-CW include it in their budget plan. We highlighted the fact that the ACOE-CW Aquatic Plant Control program is the nation's only federally authorized program for research and development of effective, science-based strategies to manage invasive aquatic weeds and discussed the [letter](#) supported by 11 organizations, including WSSA and APMS, highlighting the importance of the program.

### **WEED SCIENCE SOCIETIES SUBMIT COMMENTS ON USDA-ARS DRAFT BIOCONTROL ROADMAP**

The draft Biocontrol and Bio-Based Tools Research Roadmap presents a good first step toward the development and adoption of biocontrol and other bio-based strategies in agricultural production under a shared vision for sustainable pest, weed, and disease management. Its long-term impact, however, will depend on how effectively these concepts are translated into coordinated research, practical applications, and measurable outcomes for growers. The document

could be improved by clearly articulating how biocontrol and other bio-based strategies could be integrated across different production systems or describing the barriers preventing its integration. USDA-ARS posed five questions for comment. The Weed Science Societies comments can be read [here](#).

### **RECENT U.S. GRADUATES EXEMPT FROM NEW H-1B FEE**

The Trump Administration has [clarified](#) that the new \$100,000 H-1B visa fee will not apply to recent graduates of U.S. institutions transitioning from an F-1 student visa to an H-1B, as this is considered a "change of status." While the guidance from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services allows for exceptions on an individual basis, it appears to rule out a blanket exemption for higher education institutions.

The American Council on Education has [asked](#) the Department of Homeland Security to exempt U.S. colleges and universities from the fee, noting that "faculty, researchers, and staff hired under H-1Bs educate domestic students in areas of national need, such as health care, engineering, and education fields." Other organizations have also urged broader relief and filed lawsuits challenging the fee's implementation.

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**THINK NEWSLETTER**  
Deadline for April issue  
March 1, 2026

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# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
January 26–29, 2026	Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS) Annual Meeting	Nashville, Tennessee	<a href="http://www.sww.ws">www.sww.ws</a>
February 9–12, 2026	Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) Annual Meeting	Raleigh, North Carolina	<a href="http://www.wssa.net">www.wssa.net</a>
March 2–5, 2026	Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS) Annual Meeting	Tucson, Arizona	<a href="http://www.wsweedscience.org">www.wsweedscience.org</a>
July 13–16, 2026	Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) Annual Meeting	Phoenix, Arizona	<a href="http://www.apms.org">www.apms.org</a>
November 23–26, 2026	Canadian Weed Science Society (CWSS-SCM) Annual Meeting	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	<a href="http://www.weedscience.ca">www.weedscience.ca</a>
December 7–10, 2026	North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS) and Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS) Joint Annual Meeting	Columbus, Ohio	<a href="http://www.ncwss.org">www.ncwss.org</a> and <a href="http://www.newss.org">www.newss.org</a>

Additional Weed Science Meetings and Events can be found at <http://wssa.net/meeting/calendar-of-meetings/>

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## THINK NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for April issue**  
**March 1, 2026**