



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Lee Van Wychen
Science Policy Director
National & Regional Weed
Science Societies
Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net
202-746-4686

Study on Genetically Engineered Crops Nears Completion

LAWRENCE, KANSAS – December 17, 2015 – Two decades after their introduction, genetically engineered crops remain a hot-button issue – especially when it comes to their use in food. Conflicting opinions and unanswered questions have created a confusing landscape for consumers and policymakers alike.

A soon-to-be completed study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine is designed to address this lingering confusion and to bring an independent, objective voice to what has sometimes been a contentious debate.

A [20-person, multidisciplinary scientific panel](#) has spent nearly two years gathering and analyzing information and will publish its conclusions in the spring of 2016. Carol Mallory-Smith, Ph.D., a past president of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) from Oregon State University, is serving on the panel.

The group's upcoming report will explore a wide variety of agronomic, environmental, health and socioeconomic factors, including whether initial concerns about the impact of genetically engineered crops have been realized and whether promises about their benefits have been fulfilled.

Since the launch of the study last year, the National Academies committee has hosted numerous public meetings and webinars and has heard presentations from 80 experts – all recorded and posted for public access on the [organization's website](#). Several are of particular interest to weed scientists, including:

- A webinar exploring potential agricultural uses of [RNA interference \(RNAi\)](#), a natural process cells use to silence the activity of specific genes. Scientists have begun to explore whether RNAi can interrupt gene activity that confers herbicide resistance to weeds.
- A [Pest Management Practices Workshop](#) that examines the tradeoffs among various approaches, including a comparison of the environmental impact of genetically engineered and non-genetically engineered cropping systems.
- A webinar on [U.S. Agricultural Extension](#), which includes a presentation on “Farmer Attitudes and Experiences with Genetically Engineered Crops in Kansas” delivered by Dallas Peterson, professor and extension weed specialist at Kansas State University.
- [Presentations and discussions on genetically engineered crops](#) involving federal regulatory agencies and industry representatives.

More about the study and ways to stay informed can be found at the study website, <http://nas-sites.org/ge-crops>.

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 Society 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.