



For Immediate Release

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Weed Science Society of America Names 2015 Award Winners

LAWRENCE, Kansas — February 10, 2015 – This week the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) presented awards to more than two dozen individuals for their outstanding contributions to the field of weed science. The awards were presented during the organization’s annual meeting, held this year in Lexington, Kentucky.

“We were delighted to honor scientists who are spearheading innovations and advancing the weed science profession through their research, teaching, publishing and outreach,” said Joe DiTomaso, Ph.D., president of WSSA.

Fellow Awards. WSSA presented the fellow award – its highest recognition – to two distinguished scientists:

- **R. Douglas Sammons, Ph.D.**, a senior fellow with Monsanto. Sammons leads a team studying the biochemical characterization of glyphosate resistance mechanisms. He previously led an insecticidal protein discovery team and participated in registering Bollgard®. He also blazed trails as a member of the herbicide design team exploring the chemical mechanism of EPSPS and the enzymology of glyphosate. Sammons’ stewardship activities include work on Roundup Ready® products, as well as hosting students and postdoctoral scientists studying glyphosate resistance. In 2010 he was awarded Monsanto’s Science and Technology Career Award.

In addition to naming Sammons a fellow, WSSA also presented him with an Outstanding Reviewer Award for his review of scientific papers prior to their publication.

- **Wiley Carroll Johnson III, Ph.D.**, a research agronomist in weed science with the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service in Tifton, Ga. Johnson is actively involved in the study of organic production of peanut and vegetable crops, including weed ecology and the use of integrated weed management systems and alternative weed management strategies. He previously was an extension agronomist with the University of Georgia. During his 30-year

career, Johnson has published well over a 100 articles. His research accomplishments have earned him recognitions from the American Peanut Research and Education Society, Southern Weed Science Society, Georgia Organics, American Peanut Research and Education Society, and the University of Georgia.

Public Service Award. WSSA honored **David Shaw**, Ph.D., for his leadership on the issue of herbicide resistance. Shaw is past-president of the Society, current chair of the Herbicide Resistance Education Committee, and vice president for research and economic development at Mississippi State University. He chaired a USDA-APHIS task force on Herbicide Resistance Best Management Practices and Recommendations, a Council for Agricultural Science and Technology task force on the impacts of resistant weeds on tillage systems, and the planning committee for two Herbicide Resistance Summits at the National Academy of Sciences. He also has participated in the largest long-term field projects on glyphosate resistance management ever established. Among his many honors and awards are fellow recognitions from both WSSA and the American Association for Advancement of Science.

Outstanding Extension Award. WSSA honored **Larry Steckel**, Ph.D., a professor of weed science, extension and agricultural research at the University of Tennessee. Steckel has received several awards for his extension, outreach and research efforts, including recognitions from Gamma Sigma Delta and the university's Institute of Agriculture. He has an extensive applied research program on weed management in agronomic crops, including glyphosate-resistant horseweed, giant ragweed and Palmer amaranth. He and his graduate students also evaluate novel integrated weed management technologies. Steckel is a former agronomist with Pioneer Hi Bred International.

Outstanding Teacher Award. WSSA honored **Kirk Howatt**, Ph.D., professor and coordinator of the Crop and Weed Sciences academic program at North Dakota State University in Fargo. The curriculum Howatt helped the university build has fueled significant growth; in recent years the number of students majoring or minoring in the crop and weed sciences has more than tripled. In addition to coordinating the academic program, Howatt has researched weeds in cereals and oilseed crops and has taught courses and graduate seminars in weed science, advanced weed science, weed identification, herbicide fate and action, and professional development. He also has served as Agronomy Club advisor.

Outstanding Graduate Student Award. WSSA honored **Sarah Berger**, who earned her Ph.D. and Master's degrees at the University of Florida. Berger's Ph.D. research focused on how Palmer amaranth competition impacts water use by cotton and peanut crops. She also researched herbicide programs in cotton, peanut and corn crops and developed extension materials for Florida growers. Her Master's research focused on herbicide resistance in aquatic weeds and on novel methods to document resistance. Sarah has authored or co-authored seven peer-reviewed publications and has presented her research at 14 conferences. She is currently employed at Monsanto Company as a lead scientist on a crop assessment team.

Outstanding Research Award. WSSA honored **Franck Dayan**, Ph.D., who is a researcher with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service Natural Products Utilization Research Unit. Dayan has devoted his career to the study of mechanisms of action in both synthetic and natural herbicides and to exploring how plants evolve resistance. He has published 116 refereed journal articles and 57 reviews and book chapters. His work has been cited nearly 5700 times. Dayan is currently president of the Phytochemical Society of North America, treasurer of the International Weed Science Society, and associate editor of "Weed Science" and "Pesticide Biochemistry and Physiology."

Outstanding Early Career Weed Scientist. WSSA honored **Ian Burke**, Ph.D., an associate professor in Crop and Soil Sciences at Washington State University, Pullman. Burke's program focuses on weed physiology, biology and ecology and on practical, economic ways to manage weeds. He researches weeds in wheat, pulses, alfalfa, medicinal crops and tree fruit. He teaches an undergraduate course, serves as an advisor to graduate students and has authored or co-authored 60 journal articles and two book chapters.

Outstanding Industry Award. WSSA honored **Dirk Drost**, Ph.D., of Syngenta Crop Protection. Drost established Syngenta's R&D Project and Portfolio Management Team and served as company liaison to the USDA's IR4 Project. He has been instrumental in the establishment of 840 tolerances and more than 3,800 new uses for crop protection compounds for specialty and minor crop growers. He also has been involved in field testing and screening of safeners, herbicide extenders and the HPPD inhibitors. Drost led the early biological development effort for the mesotrione family of herbicides. He currently serves on the board of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST).

Outstanding Paper Awards. WSSA honored the following individuals for published papers:

- **James Leary, Brooke Mahnken, Linda Cox, Adam Radford, John Yanagida, Teya Penniman, David Duffy** and **Jeremy Gooding** for their paper in Invasive Plant and Science Management: "Reducing Nascent *Miconia (Miconia calvescens DC)* Patches with an Accelerated Intervention Strategy Utilizing Herbicide Ballistic Technology." Leary, Yanagida and Duffy work for the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Mahnken, Radford and Penniman work for the Maui Invasive Species Committee. Cox is with Texas A&M University, and Gooding is liaison for the National Park Service Pacific Island Exotic Plant Management Team.
- **Franklin Egan, Kathryn Barlow** and **David Mortensen** for their paper in Weed Science: "A Meta-Analysis on the Effects of 2,4-D and Dicamba Drift on Soybean and Cotton." Egan is with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Barlow is working on her Ph.D. at Penn State. Mortensen is a professor at Penn State.
- **Michael Walsh** and **Stephen Powles** for their paper in Weed Technology: "High Seed Retention at Maturity of Annual Weeds Infesting Crop Fields Highlights the Potential for Harvest Weed Seed Control." Walsh and Powles work with the University of Western Australia Herbicide Resistance Initiative. Powles is director of the program and a WSSA honorary fellow.

Outstanding Reviewer Awards. WSSA honored the following individuals for their review of scientific papers:

- **Muthu Bagavathiannan**, Ph.D., an assistant professor at Texas A&M University, College Station. His research focuses on the evolutionary biology of herbicide resistance in weeds and on how to develop integrated resistance management solutions. Bagavathiannan also uses simulation modeling and information technology tools to guide informed decision making by growers. He has authored or coauthored more than 25 peer-reviewed journal articles, two book chapters and three extension fact sheets, and he has presented his research at both national and international meetings. He currently serves on three WSSA committees and is WSSA's liaison to the Crop Science Society of America.
- **R. Douglas Sammons**, Ph.D., a senior fellow with Monsanto, who also was named a WSSA fellow. (See above.)

Honorary Member Award. WSSA named **Samunder Singh**, Ph.D., an honorary member of the Society. Singh is a senior scientist and professor at CCS Haryana Agricultural University in India where his work focuses on weed biology, herbicide resistance and its management, weed surveys and integrated weed management. Singh has been very active in weed science throughout his career. He has published more than 120 refereed papers, seven book chapters, 16 conference papers and 30 extension articles. He has delivered 40 broadcast talks on weed management and presented papers at 58 conferences. He is a life member of several scientific societies and has received fellow and gold medal recognitions from the Indian Society of Weed Science. He is a regular reviewer for Weed Science and Weed Technology.

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.