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# The University of Georgia

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College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences  
*Department of Crop and Soil Sciences*

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WSSA NIFA Fellow report

submitted by Donn Shilling

I was appointed the WSSA NIFA Fellow in November of 2014. This new position was established because we/I believe that working within the USDA will be an effective approach to enhancing issues that are important to weed science within this critical agency. One of the primary reasons for the Weed Science Society of America's significant impact on agriculture and society has been our unwavering focus on ensuring that everything we do is based on "good science." Public and private weed science research, education and technology transfer will continue to contribute fundamentally to science and the development of practical solutions for weed management in natural and agricultural systems. Part of WSSA's mission will continue to be helping facilitate the discovery of new knowledge and evaluation of innovative concepts and technologies to enhance our fundamental and practical understanding of weeds and their management. This endeavor requires continuous and significant funding from public and private sources. Although private funding has been, and will continue to be significant, public funding (primarily USDA) has been inconsistent and we believe USDA could do more. An effective tactic to fulfilling our mission is to be directly "embedded" in USDA because this agency has such a profound influence on agricultural and environmental sciences, policies, laws, funding and conducting research and education that affects our industry and science. We are hopeful that establishing a mutually beneficial relationship will improve how USDA values Weed Science.

I plan to work in NIFA several days each month. However, my efforts as the WSSA NIFA fellow will not be limited to my time in DC. My NIFA host is Mike Fitzner. I have spent time in NIFA in April and May. My tentative schedule is to work in DC the last week of each month. I have visited with several NIFA and OPMP scientists and Mike and I have developed a general plan and objectives:

My/our plan (3 parts)

1. **Networking**
  - a. Meet and greet
  - b. Specific groups where relationships with NIFA could be helpful
    - i. AHIPS
    - ii. ARS
    - iii. Office of Pest Management Policy
    - iv. Stakeholder input

2. **RFA process-how things work**
3. **Weed Science funding history**
  - a. Topics
  - b. Impacts
  - c. Amounts
  - d. Number of applications and success rates.

I/we hope this relationship will help enhance NIFA's perception of Weed Science resulting in future positions and more sustainable Weed Science funding. But first, establishing relationships with USDA scientists is essential to fulfilling our long term objectives.