

WEED SCIENCE
SOCIETY OF AMERICA



WSSA

For Immediate Release

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Students to Compete in First National WeedOlympics

LAWRENCE, Kansas – May 11, 2011 – This summer teams of students from universities across the nation will gather in Knoxville, Tenn., for the WeedOlympics – an event sponsored by the Northeastern, North Central, Southern and Western Weed Science Societies.

The July 26-27 event is open to student members of the four organizations, who will compete for bragging rights as the best student weed scientists in the country.

“We hope to provide an educational experience that will help students broaden their applied skills in weed science,” said Greg Armel, Ph.D., assistant professor in the University of Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture and co-chairman of the event along with Jim Brosnan, Ph.D. “They will have an opportunity to meet students with similar interests, to network with university and industry researchers and to practice what they’ve learned in the classroom.”

This is the first year that all regional societies have combined efforts to sponsor a competition at the national level. Students will be judged based on their performance in four important categories:

- **Weed identification:** They will be asked to identify 30 weeds in a variety of stages of growth and development, including seeds, seedlings, mature weeds and plant parts.
- **Sprayer calibration:** Students will take a written test to assess how well they understand the calibration of sprayers commonly used in weed control. They then will put those skills into action by calibrating a backpack sprayer and showing they know how to use it for a precise herbicide application.

- **Identifying herbicides:** About a month in advance of the contest, test plots of crops and weeds will be sprayed with herbicides. Students will be required to identify the herbicides applied based on visual symptoms exhibited by the crops and weeds.
- **Problem-solving:** Volunteers posing as farmers or land managers will present a weed management issue that a weed scientist might be likely to encounter on the job. Students are asked to play the role of an agricultural extension agent or industry weed specialist and to recommend an effective solution based on accepted best practices.

The contest is open to both undergraduate and graduate students, who will compete in three-person and four-person teams. Awards will be presented in graduate and undergraduate categories.

To register for the WeedOlympics or to find out more about the competition, visit: www.weedolympics2011.org.

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 Weed Science Society of America 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.

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