

Sample Focus Group Script

Herbicide-Resistance in Turf Systems: Insights and Options for Managing Complexity

General

- Welcome participants and introduce the project, its purposes and components
- Describes the focus group purposes and process, including ground rules:
 - Their perspectives are very important and we want to hear as many perspectives as possible
 - No “wrong” comments
 - Only one person speaks at a time, no side conversations
 - Will be audio recording, will be anonymous/non-attribution
- Participants complete brief demographic forms

INTRO:

- 1) *GO AROUND THE ROOM WITH THIS*: Briefly introduce yourself and describe what services are delivered from your sports operation. Please also describe what your is “role” in this operation.
- 2) *OPEN IT UP WITH THIS (i.e may not go around systematically, let them start to discuss)*:
 - Are there weeds that affect your sports operation that **have already developed resistance** to common herbicides?
 - If so, which ones and why are you concerned?
 - Are there weeds that you are concerned **may develop** resistance to common herbicides used in your sports turf operation?
 - If so, which ones, and why are you concerned?

SCENARIOS

I’m going to offer you some **scenarios** and I’m interested in hearing how you think each scenario should be approached.

Scenario 1:

Let’s imagine that a sports turf manager finds **annual bluegrass** in their operation that they suspect may be resistant to the primary herbicide or herbicides being used to control it.

- What should the producer/manager do to respond to this situation?
- Why should he/she do this?
- How might herbicide resistant annual bluegrass likely have infested this manager’s fields?

- What tools/practices do you think are most important in combatting annual bluegrass resistance in sports turf systems?

Possible probe/follow up (if do not bring these up):

- Are you familiar with “non-chemical” tactics or practices and if so, what are your views on their utility for helping manage herbicide resistant weeds? Any observations regarding effectiveness or cost?
- What are the biggest barriers or impediments to a producer/manager in implementing the tools/practices you think are most useful?
- What **kind(s) of assistance or incentives** would be most useful to a sports turf manager to implement the most important tools/practices?
- Where do managers turn for **information** on identifying and managing potential HR annual bluegrass?
 - a. Which sources of information have the greatest influence, if any, on producers’ actions?
 - b. Which are least influential?

Scenario 2:

Let’s assume a sports turf manager learns that **neighboring fields** have herbicide resistant annual bluegrass **OR** that neighboring managers rely on **supply sources** that may deliver inputs or products carrying herbicide resistant weeds.

- What do you think should the manager should do to respond to this situation?
- Why should he or she do this?
 - If your recommended management approaches differ from a scenario in which the herbicide resistant annual bluegrass occurs only on the manager’s own fields/plots, why is that?
- What kinds of actions by turf managers or others cause herbicide resistant weeds to infest neighbors’ fields or operations?
- Are there cooperative approaches for cases like this that you think might be useful and effective in managing herbicide resistant annual bluegrass in turf systems.
 - If so, what might such an approach look like?
 - Do you think such an approach is possible?
 - What might be some challenges to such an approach?

General Follow up Questions:

1. Which key actors need to be involved in addressing herbicide resistant annual bluegrass problem in sports turf sectors?
 - a. For example - Turf managers, chemical firms, government agencies, universities, or others?
 - b. Is there a “top three” of these that need to be involved?
2. Do you think herbicide resistance in annual bluegrass is a short-term or long-term problem?

Wrap Up

- What was the most important observation from today’s discussion?
- Are there questions I did not ask that I should have? Was anything missing from our conversation?