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Dear President of a Regional and Affiliated Weed Science Society

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The WSSA Herbicide Resistance Education Committee is reaching out to all the regional weed science societies for their help and partnership to conduct workshops focused on the diversity of local successes, challenges, failures, and needs related to managing herbicide resistance. Following is a DRAFT proposal, and I emphasize draft, because we need and want your input on how to do this: what are we missing: groups to involve, possible outcomes, strategies to encourage participation, or other considerations. Our past efforts have been driven from the national level and, this time, we want to be sure that we fully engage the expertise and experiences within the regional societies. We want the outcome to be more specifically relevant to your membership and the agricultural community within your region. This is also a way to gather information that can demonstrate to policy makers that herbicide resistance will not be managed by a “once size fits all” approach.

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Our intention is to hold these workshops in the fall of 2016. They would serve as a prelude to another Herbicide Resistance Summit to be held in the fall of 2017. While we have made tremendous progress in education and awareness relating to herbicide resistance, we feel another Summit, and the workshops leading to it, are critical to maintaining momentum on this critical issue. These will be facilitated listening sessions with the objectives of identifying stories and speakers for those stories on which to build the next Summit. APHIS is strongly supportive of this idea and is willing to accept a proposal to provide \$50K in funding for the workshops. The WSSA board has already committed \$10K for them. The committee has also identified additional funds to use for this effort. Funds would be primarily used to support a facilitator, limited travel (most participants would fund their own travel), meals and other direct costs for the events.

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For the regional workshops, we believe they need to reflect the diversity of herbicide resistance challenges, commodities, and other differences between areas but, at the same time, it will not be possible to fractionate the country too far. Within each workshop, we feel rich discussions, stimulated by a diversity of thought, are very important. Outcomes of the workshops need to identify successes and failures, why each have occurred, and how the policies of all involved need to support HRM within the broader context of all the other management decisions that must be made. We also believe it is important to not pre-suppose what could come out of each workshop. We do not want to constrain the participants in any way by asking questions that lead to answers we think are correct, rather than opening up the dialog.

CONSTITUTION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

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What we are asking for at this point from the regional societies is help in identifying reasonable regional geographic areas related to herbicide resistance challenges and management plus coordinators for each area to organize the workshops. There would be one regional meeting within each area. After much discussion among the committee members, we are suggesting the following regional breakdown and potential co-leaders:

- Northwest – Ian Burke and Don Morishita
- Southwest – Brad Hansen and Brian Schutte
- Mid-South – Darren Dodds and Larry Steckel
- Deep South – Ramon Leon and Stanley Culpepper
- Mid-Atlantic/Northeast – Mark Van Gessel and Bill Curran
- Plains – Phil Stahlman and Andrew Kniss
- Midwest – Christy Sprague and Bryan Young

We would be asking the co-leaders to identify a site and facility for the meeting plus other needs for the workshop. Most importantly, we would be relying on the co-leaders and their contacts to insure participation of growers, consultants, commodity group representatives, local Federal agency personnel, ag retailers and others at the workshop. It is this regional connection that we are most anxious for your help with. Groups that could be involved include NACD, commodity groups, NAICC, NASDA, CropLife America, HRAC, Ag Retailers Association, and others. We have to make absolutely sure there is appropriate representation at every meeting, e.g. conservation districts, conservation groups, not just the favorites of the organizers. We are targeting 100-120 people at each meeting.

Of course, we expect the co-leaders to adapt these ideas to best fit their area. We anticipate hiring a facilitator to actually run the meetings. We have experience in using a facilitator for the workshop held in advance of the Second Herbicide Summit and believe he was critical to the success of the workshop and Summit.

What possible outcomes do we want from the workshops? Here are some ideas we had:

- A boots on the ground perspective on what the problems are and the complexity of them.
- What solutions have they found – what are their successes?
- What has inhibited them from implementing HRM?
- What kinds of incentives would move them to get over the barriers?
- Who would be spokespersons coming out of the workshops to go to DC for the Summit?
- Do we need to broaden this across all taxa?
- How do we best tap into the innovations of farmers?
- How do we best use a community-based approach to HRM, with accountability to each other as a component?
- Are the growers getting conflicting messages from all of those “helping” them make decisions: bankers, agency programs, weed scientists, consultants, retailers, processors, and others? If so, what is confusing about what they hearing from the different parties?

As we proceed, we will need to think about what background/read-ahead materials should be provided to the participants. We are also considering holding a webinar ahead of time to set the stage. This may be more effective for setting the stage than simply supplying the participants their materials ahead of time.

There is a lot more to consider and decide before the workshops to ensure their success but will your society join with us in this effort? Again, this is a draft proposal, so we truly want and need your input.

Thanks and we will look forward to working together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David B. Shaw". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

David Shaw

Chair, WSSA Herbicide Resistance Education Committee