SCIENCE POLICY REPORT – Lee Van Wychen
WSWS Summer Board Meeting- Denver, CO. July 30-31, 2018

1. **New Job Title and Intern:** The WSSA Board of Directors approved an 'upgrade' for my job title: "Executive Director of Science Policy (EDSP)." They also approved a pay raise and provided funding for a **Science Policy Intern** position for a 6 to 12 month period, which I will begin advertising later this summer. Thank you WSWS for your support!

2. **Dicamba Research Workshop.** I spent a good amount of time this spring co-organizing and writing a report for the "WSSA Research Workshop for Managing Dicamba Off-Target Movement" that was held April 16-17 in Arlington, VA. The final report, press release and workshop presentations are available at: http://wssa.net/wssa/technology-stewardship/dicamba-off-target-movement/. Auxin herbicide stewardship continues to be a major issue and reports of dicamba damaged soybeans, hort crops, and trees and landscape plants continue to escalate again this summer across parts of the mid-South and into the Midwest. EPA is expected to make a decision in August on whether or not to re-register the new dicamba formulations.

3. **WSSA-NIFA Fellow Selection.** The selection committee, composed of Scott Senseman, Donn Schilling, Lee Van Wychen, Janis McFarland, Larry Steckel, Steve Fennimore and Mike Fitzner, had a two hour video conference call on July 23 to interview the two finalists: Dr. Sharon Clay and Dr. Jim Kells. A candidate was selected and is pending final approval from the WSSA Board.

4. **FY 2019 Federal Budget.** After a bipartisan budget agreement this spring that set spending limits for FY 2018 and FY 2019 above the sequestration caps Congress self-imposed in 2013, both the House and Senate are on track to move all 12 of their spending bills out of committee by the August recess (Senate will only have 1 wk of recess instead of 5 wks).

Selected Discretionary Appropriations Accounts

Program	**2016 Final**	**2017 Final**	**2018 Final**	**FY 2019 House**	**FY 2019 Senate**
	---------- Millions of Dollars ----------				
USDA- ARS*	1143	1170	**1203**	1259	1301
USDA- NIFA	1326	1363	**1407**	1447	1423
Hatch Act (Experiment Stations)	244	244	**244**	259	244
Smith-Lever 3(b) & (c) (Extension)	300	300	**300**	315	300
AFRI competitive grants	350	375	**400**	415	405
IR-4 Minor Crops	11.9	11.9	**11.9**	11.9	11.9
Crop Protection & Pest Mang't (IPM)	17.2	20	**20**	20	20

*House and Senate Appropriators both rejected the White House proposal to close 20 of ARS research facilities

- Need for weed science societies letter to USDA-ARS on weed science issues. Status of Weed Science National Program Leader (NPL). The $90 million ARS National Program 304 (plant pest research) gets reviewed in March 2019 and will incorporate stakeholder feedback into its next 5 yr plan.
- **Areawide-IPM (AIPM) bill (H.R. 5411)** supports AIPM project funding in USDA-NIFA and is co-sponsored by Rep's Yoho (R-FL) and Gabbard (D-HI). I helped organize and was one of the presenters (along with 4 entomologists) for a May 10 briefing on Capitol Hill that highlighted the benefits of AIPM research. I highlighted Dr. Madsen's work in the Delta Region Areawide Aquatic Weed Project (DRAAWP) in California as well as the TEAM Leafy Spurge project in northern Great Plains and the TAME Melaleuca areawide project in Florida. USDA-ARS has $5.2M for AIPM research in FY 2018, but the Administration/OMB has not supported and Congress has had to restore. Need to look under the couch cushions for new money for AIPM and push NIFA to make it a priority.
- Technically, NIFA already has authority to fund AIPM research under "Diversified IPM programs" within the Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) line item. However, no money allocated for that purpose.

5. **Farm Bill Passes House and Senate, But Major Differences to Iron Out in Conference**: The House passed their version of the Farm Bill on June 21 by a vote of 213-211, after voting it down on their first attempt to pass it on May 18. The Senate was able to advance its version of a Farm Bill on a 86-11 vote on their first attempt on June 27. There are many good weed science things in House bill regarding regulatory reforms that are not in the Senate bill, which includes a legislative fix for the duplicative National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program permits, a legislative repeal of the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, legislative guidance to streamline the FIFRA-ESA consultation process on endangered species, and reauthorization of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA). (NOTE- the Senate advanced a PRIA extension bill separately). The House bill does not reauthorize mandatory funding for the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR), which was created in the 2014 Farm Bill, but the Senate Farm Bill does include $200 million for FFAR, which requires a 50/50 match for proposals. (I'm working on a multimillion $ proposal on genetic biocontrol of weeds using gene drives). The conference negotiations between the House and the Senate will get underway next week to try and iron out all the differences between the two bills. The bottom line is that it will have to be a bipartisan bill to get 60 votes in the Senate.

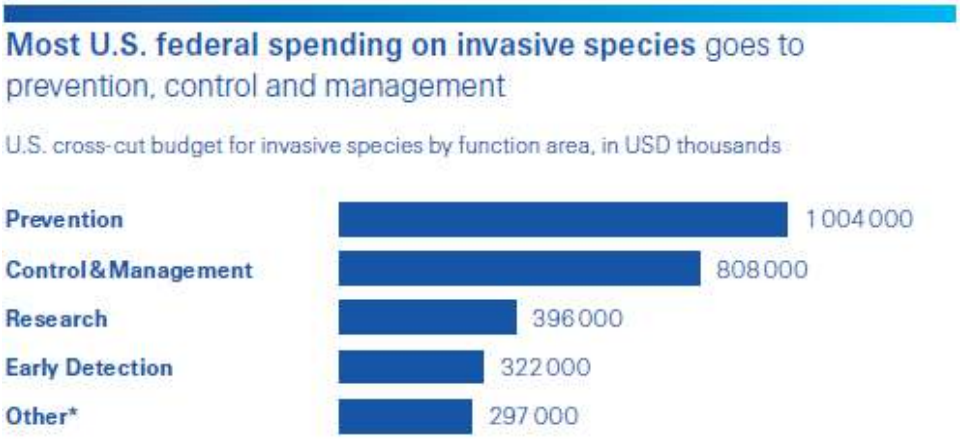
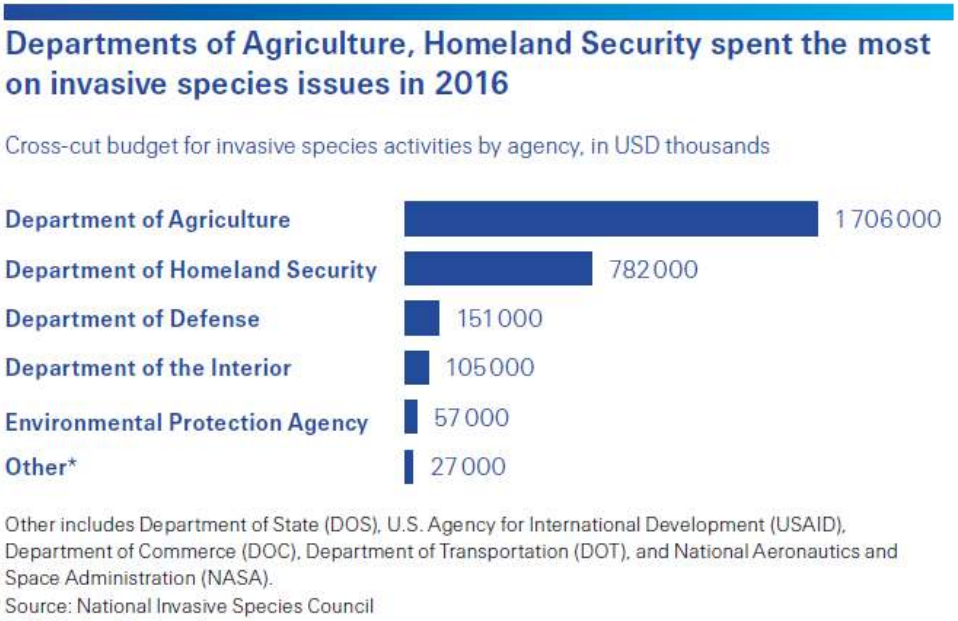
6. **Uniform Pesticide Labeling Initiative with EPA**: One of the main recommendations in the dicamba research report was for the herbicide registrants and EPA to provide more uniform herbicide labels. By "uniform", we mean each label has a standard format with the same info in the same section of each label. EPA does provide some standard herbicide label guidance wording, but ultimately, it's up to the registrant on how their label appears. EPA is on board with this initiative (i.e Rick Keigwin), but the registrants will be the ones that have to support and push this. It would likely take years to implement. WSSA will work with the Herbicide Resistance Action Committee (HRAC) and CropLife America to explore how to move this initiative forward.

7. **Pruitt Out, Wheeler In at EPA**: Scott Pruitt's last day as EPA administrator was July 6. Andrew Wheeler, EPA Deputy Administrator, will take over as Acting Administrator. He was confirmed by the Senate on April 12 by a 53 – 45 vote. Wheeler is a native of Ohio and received a BA in English and in Biology from Case Western Reserve University, a JD from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law, and an MBA from George Mason University School of Management. His first job was with EPA between 1991-1995 working on toxic chemical and pollution prevention issues. He is a long time Senate staffer having worked for Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH), Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK), and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Wheeler most recently served as Senior VP for Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting, a national advisory and advocacy firm dealing with energy and natural resources practice. Wheeler's reputation is as a smooth insider who works well with both friends and adversaries and thus will likely make him even more effective at deregulation that Pruitt. Wheeler can easily carry out the Administrations' same agenda for deregulation but without the drama of Pruitt.

8. **2018 Weed Survey of Common and Troublesome Weeds:** The overall number of survey responses in 2018 is good. However, some Western states (and provinces) need a kick-in-the-you-know-what because they have **two or less** survey responses (**Alaska, Arizona, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, British Columbia, Saskatchewan**). Areas being surveyed: 1) Aquatic: irrigation, flood control, 2) Aquatic: lakes, rivers, reservoirs, 3) Aquatic: ponds, 4) Forestry, 5) Natural Areas: parks, wildlife refuges, 6) Ornamentals: field nursery crops, outdoor containers, Christmas trees, and 7) Right-of-Ways: railways, roads, public utilities. PLEASE take the survey if you haven't already and pass along to a colleague in the states/provinces mentioned above: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018weedsurvey Thanks!

9. **WSSA-EPA Weed Science Tour.** Nebraska and SW Iowa: July 30 – Aug. 3, 2018. WSSA-EPA Liaison Greg Kruger is organizing. 10 EPA Staff attending plus 2 from Central region office. Jill Schroeder and Lee Van Wychen attending from WSSA. We fly in to North Platte, NE on July 30 and depart Omaha, NE on Aug. 3.

10. **TAG-BCAW**: John Madsen, USDA-ARS in Davis, CA, was selected as WSSA's rep for the Technical Advisory Group for Biocontrol Agents for Weeds (TAG). TAG was first formed in 1957. There are about 15 members on TAG and they meet once a year in person and have quarterly conference calls to "review petitions for biological control of weeds and provide an exchange of views, information and advice to researchers".

11. **Insurance against Invasive Species?** Part of Johns Hopkins report. Insurance tools have the potential to mitigate the economic impacts of invasive species. Insurance, whether for fire, flood, or even crop loss, mitigates risk by guaranteeing financial relief when damages are incurred. Currently, there is a need for more coordinated research, and

better data, on the ability of insurance to mitigate against economic damages from invasive species. It is generally much cheaper to prevent invasive species from entering an area, or to deal with them during early stages, than to manage them after they become a visible problem. In many cases, however, awareness of invasions only occurs after the invasive species have taken root. Managing invasions at this point is exponentially more expensive. Municipalities and private stakeholders can benefit if they have response mechanisms in place and if they have access to a pool of funds that is ready to disperse the moment a potential threat is identified. Insurance may offer a solution to fill funding gaps during the critical stage of rapid response. Insurance may also play a role in helping governments and industries manage future lawsuits related to invasive species damages – by ensuring proper controls are in place beforehand, and by providing funds should the suit occur. For example, power outages related to invasive species attacks, or diseases transmitted via invasive species migration, may open up parties who were aware of or responsible for managing invasive species to potentially costly litigation.