

cover and the type of weed species are other factors that would influence seed persistence in chaff lines or chaff tramlines.

What are the options for treating the weeds in the chaff line or tramlines?

Short answer: Farmers are leading the way with practical solutions to manage weeds along chaff lines and chaff tramlines.

Longer answer: Some growers use an optical sprayer or a boom with nozzles only operating on the chaff line or tramlines to apply a mix of herbicides that may be too expensive to apply to the entire paddock. Weed seed that is collected at harvest and placed in the chaff line, may have survived in-crop herbicide applications and may be herbicide resistant. Susceptibility testing can help identify herbicides that can provide effective control.

Non-herbicide options are to wait for germination and chip or trample the weeds. In a mixed farming operation, sheep can graze the chaff lines, rendering most of the weed seed unviable.

Growers who have been using chaff lining and chaff tramlining for several years report that the high concentration of weed seed leads to a high level of competition between the weeds and this is compounded with competition from the following crop.

Over time, seed set reduces and any weed seed produced will be collected and returned to the chaff line the following year. When chaff is deposited on the wheeltracks, weeds that emerge face dry, compacted conditions and are often subject to frequent passes with heavy machinery.

Does it matter if I use a draper or a stripper front?

Short answer: No, not in terms of amount of weed seed harvested, provided you set up and operate with weed seed collection in mind.

Longer answer: Our collaborators Dr John Broster, Dr Michael Walsh and Annie Rayner conducted trials with stripper and draper fronts at two trial sites.

The results at one site showed that it is possible to achieve the same level of weed seed collection with the two harvester front options. At the other trial site, the stripper front was not as effective as a result of wider row spacing, higher operating height and faster operating speed compared to the draper front at the same site.

The key to success with chaff-only harvest weed seed tools is getting the weed seed in the front and effectively separating the weed seed and chaff from the straw component. The *WeedSmart* website provides practical information about setting up different harvesters and operating them for effective harvest weed seed control.

Bear in mind that a stripper front will generate a lot less chaff than a cutter type front, and so this is likely to influence weed suppression and the rate of weed seed decay. ■

HOW TO ASK A WEEDSMART QUESTION

Ask your questions about weed control in the chaff line on the WeedSmart Innovations Facebook page [WeedSmartAU](#), Twitter [@WeedSmartAU](#) or the WeedSmart website <https://weedsmart.org.au/category/ask-an-expert/>

'WeedSmart' is an industry-led initiative that aims to enhance on-farm practices and promote the long term, sustainable use of herbicides in Australian agriculture.



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