

While the WSHGA supports the advance of technology and science to keep agriculture viable and productive, we are asking for the postponement of Roundup Ready alfalfa at this time in the state of Washington.

Relayed below is a letter sent to Forage Genetics and Monsanto on August 15, 2005 regarding the release of Roundup Ready alfalfa in Washington State.

The Washington State Hay Growers urgently requests that you do not release Roundup Ready alfalfa in the state of Washington until there is written verification from our export customers that they will accept Roundup Ready alfalfa. It is important that such acceptance be assured by the actual alfalfa buyer in Japan and also in other export markets. Acceptance by the Japanese government in and of itself is NOT sufficient since such approval does not equate to acceptance by the importer there. Enclosed are copies of letters from all of the major alfalfa export companies in the state expressing support for this request and delineating their concerns about the release of RR alfalfa in the state. These companies have people at the forefront of doing business with the Pacific Rim countries where virtually all of our export markets are located. Their conclusions on this matter are based on their own personal experience in these markets and must be carefully considered by all parties.

Washington is unique as a state in our position regarding this matter. Exports of alfalfa are a vital part of our market. In 2003, total production of alfalfa in the state was 2,700,000 tons. 70% of this production was in the Columbia Basin and it's estimated that 35% to 50% of that production is exported, the majority going to Japan. A number of growers in the Columbia Basin export in excess of 75% of their production. These figures clearly point out what is at stake in this matter to the producers of the majority of Washington alfalfa. Anything that jeopardizes their export market also jeopardizes their very existence as growers. If they lose their export markets, they will be out of business. Further, it is felt that a healthy export market has a "spill over" effect on the domestic market, helping keep it healthy also. Loss of the export market would have detrimental effects on all Washington alfalfa producers.

By making this request we are not taking a position in opposition to the RR technology. We understand the benefits associated with it and believe that it will likely be an integral part of the industry in the future. We are asking for the delay in the release here in Washington so that all questions relating to it's acceptance in our export markets can be fully resolved.

Please let us know what your company's position on this request is as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration of our situation.

Best regards,

Chep Gauntt
President