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### *THE NEXT REVOLUTION IN WEED MANAGEMENT*

Not so many years ago the world learned of, but roundly ignored, emergence of a visionary concept for universal weed management. The construct originated then is so omnipotent as to make manual, biological, cultural, and chemical methods utterly obsolete and unnecessary. The fundamental approach proposed--as with many other cataclysmic discoveries--to this day remains only to be fully and effectively implemented for worldwide gain .

In a little known journal article, a dedicated civil servant offered the initial clue to the type of weed management that humans have vainly sought for years, maybe centuries. No more back-breaking manual toil under the broiling sun; no more application of potentially hazardous plant-killing chemicals; no laborious research on biocontrol agents; no more expenditure of precious petroleum reserves. The answer, according to this unheralded yet revolutionary concept, is: music.

Yes, this one man forthrightly asserted in his uncanny observances some years ago, "we have learned that the right kind of music, played at the right time, will increase the crops of fruit or grain."

It doesn't take an analytic mind long to grasp the tremendous portents of that statement and then leap to its reverse corollary: The wrong kind of music played at the wrong time will decrease the growth of crops or grain. And from that, it is immediately and clearly apparent that certain types of music played at certain times will hinder or even destroy certain plants. Voila! Selective weed management by music.

The implications for agriculture, global research, and musicians' unions are staggering. Forward thinking visionaries will see to it that many of the well known research universities promptly initiate active experimental trials in what will undoubtedly be identified as harmonic/cacophonous weed management. Legions of investigators will venture into the field and greenhouse to experiment with weeding by Wagner.

Governmental organizations that fund research will--eventually--realize the importance of this new and powerful technology and structure all future calls for grant applicants to be submitted in the form of scores, with notes. Grant interviews will only be scheduled for venues with superb acoustics.

Major entrepreneurs in agricultural production, those venturesome early adopters,

won't wait for the results of protracted research, but will pioneer rhythm in the row crops. Some will set up stereo systems and loud speakers to blast out rock or hip-hop, while the more cautious will employ crooners and slightly off-key local vocal groups, or barbershop quartets, for especially difficult herbicide-resistant weeds. Others may simply utilize young children walking among the crops beating on drums, or old hollow or rusted herbicide containers.

Engineers will cease endlessly toying with sprayers activated by light generated impulses, throw their nozzle collection in the dustbin, and concentrate on waltzes by the Wicked Weed Wallopers. Arguments will run rife over whether bagpipers should be turned loose pre-emerge or post-emerge.

Controversy also will erupt over the merits of classical music (sugar Beethoven) versus popular tunes (Stomping at the Savoy). Brush control experts and forestry specialists will have a clearer starting point as they rush to purchase scarce reissues of Woody Herman's immortal "Woodchoppers Ball."

Loudness will emerge as a factor stemming from a relationship between decibels and successful cacophonic-based control. Somewhere, among the legions of over-eager corporate farm managers, an individual will deduce that if loud music is good, very loud music must be better. Since technology will lag in devising means of controlling sound waves rolling across an open field, there'll doubtlessly arise cases of the right kind of wrong music played at deafening levels to control smartweed in soybeans, drifting onto a neighbor's farm and flattening his vegetable garden. Music distribution impresarios will have to bulk up their legal staffs to defend against angry music haters (recently switched away from spray-o-phobial pursuits).

Inevitably, the Environmental Protection folks will get involved necessitating creation of a division to promulgate musical tolerances for various crops and acceptable loudness levels, not to mention protection for field laborers who may be totally overcome by a desire to stop working and boogie on the spot.

Recording companies will not only keep an eye on the top 40, but will be vying for a farm smash hit. One can predict that some fortunate individual will stumble on the right balance of wrong sounds and overnight produce a best-selling record for weed management. Superstars will be crowned according to their ability to blow, croon, toot, or yodel down weeds. TV talent tryout programs will be forced to shift from present modes and invite a new crop of weed wailers.

Composers will quickly abandon moon-in-June themes for more popular weed blitzing dirges. The top record companies will sponsor lavish events inviting selected distributors to not only hear the latest superstar, but more importantly, to journey out to the field and observe the results.

Meetings of learned weed science societies will still take place as a forum for researchers, practitioners, and others who will be straining--after surviving the opening banquet featuring rubber chicken and a somnolence inducing main address--to literally exchange notes. Wide-eyed graduate students in attendance will still aim to land a handsomely compensated position with industry, but in the intricate recruiting dance may be required to meet with potential employers in a private room

to deliver a rendition of the scales.

Farm shows will soon replace sprayers and other relics with displays of woofers, sound blasters, and an array of impressive electronic gadgetry. The major stereo set manufacturers will produce and aggressively market, in addition to living room consoles, specialized weeding sets for tractors, or what will soon be dubbed weed steeds. In towns, youngsters will quickly catch onto earning easy pocket money by going door to door with miniaturized wrist stereos offering to weed home gardens. Never mind the safety hazard of using a cell phone while driving, the imminent threat will come from improper I-Pod usage and inadvertent flower bed destruction.

Terminology will evolve to reflect the trend. The words "hoe" and "herbicide" will rapidly become archaic and be dropped from usage. It will be common parlance to refer to harmonic selectivity in alfalfa, or, for growers to converse among themselves with phrases such as, "Tomorrow I'm gonna polka my orchard." That, of course, will occur only after they authorize an equipment tune up.

New, specifically conceived and designed musical instruments will be developed, such as the weedaphone and weedwind. Some entrepreneur will organize a group of massed weedaphones to tour agricultural areas and contract to weed fields on a custom basis. Of course, the group will have to be demonstrably expert as farmers who otherwise couldn't tell a half note from a barn door will have developed into self-recognized authorities on the anti-weed effect of trills and contrapuntal rhythm.

And those beleaguered, though vociferous non-chemical using growers will at last realize their salvation: putting the organ back in the forefront of organic.

Most farm radio stations will rapidly adjust their offerings and devote a heavy percentage of air time to featured weeding programs: Weedalong with the Wanderers, As the Weed Falls, Let's Control Those (bleeping) Weeds for Better Crops. The more progressive stations will adopt a full weed creed format.

The farm press will naturally be pressured to include CDs of weeding music in all the popular and expensive journals. The mail order columns, in amongst erectile dysfunction aids, will be heavily larded with advertisements for new weeding records by the Thistle Missile, the Choppin' Chopin, and other artists. Extension service publications, though slightly altered in content, will, however, still look and read pretty much the same. Master gardeners will, after considerable debate, devote energy and probably take prescription pills for weeding through syncopation.

The Vienna Boy's Choir most surely will be encouraged to broaden its repertoire to include "Ave Mimosa," and "Coming Through the Chromolaena."

No longer will there be an outcry of indignity about nudity and pot smoking at stupendously loud outdoor rock concerts. The grave concern arising from the activity will be redirected toward preservation of nearby shade trees and highway median strips.

It is clear that the new era of nearly pollution-free weed management methodologies predicated on this forgotten revelation is once again on the horizon. Not only is there the possibility that the world will cease to suffer the present

magnitude of yield losses caused by invading weeds, there is also the glowing promise of expanded employment opportunities for everyone from the London Philharmonic to itinerant polka bands, excepting a diehard minority of unenlightened hoe and herbicide makers. --*R.U. Whedon*. [#]