Symposium

Invasive plant species and the new bioeconomy

When: Wednesday, February 6, 2008, 1:00-5:10 p.m.
Where: Hilton Chicago, Weed Science Society of America annual meeting (www.wssa.net)
Cost: Free to all participants (with WSSA registration)

Deployment of exotic plant species for biofuel production in the U.S. highlights the benefits and risks associated with the new bioeconomy. Given the negative impacts of plant invasions, the large financial incentives to grow biofuel species, and the potential role of bioenergy crops in mitigating the global rise in atmospheric CO_2, there is an urgent need for science-based approaches to reducing the risks of dispersing such species at landscape and regional scales. The symposium will focus on invasive species risks and environmental benefits associated with biofeedstock crop development as a case study for understanding the scientific issues underlying plant invasions related to bioeconomy uses. Identifying the scientific knowledge necessary for conducting risk-benefit analyses of candidate biofuel species will be a unifying theme of the symposium talks. The objective of this symposium is to encourage the wider use of risk-benefit analyses of biofuel, and other bioeconomy, species by alerting professional weed scientists and invasion biologists to this important, emerging research area and providing them with a scientific starting point for further study.

Program

1:00 p.m. Introduction, Dr. Adam Davis, USDA-ARS Invasive Weed Mgt. Unit

1:15 p.m. "Adding biofuels to the invasive species fire?", Dr. Dan Simberloff, University of Tennessee

1:45 p.m. "*Arundo donax*: a case study of a feedstock crop with invasive potential", Dr. Richard Mack, Washington State University

2:15 p.m. "Carbon-negative biofuels from low-input high-diversity grassland biomass", Dr. Jason Hill, University of Minnesota

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. "Trait-based models for identifying potential plant invaders", Dr. Roger Cousens, University of Melbourne

3:45 p.m. "Benefits from, and strategies for containing, biofuel feedstock species", Dr. David Bransby, Auburn University

4:15 p.m. Panel Discussion, moderated by Dr. S. Raghu, Queensland University of Technology

5:10 p.m. Adjourn

For further information, contact: Dr. Adam Davis, adam.davis@ars.usda.gov