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**THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR
FOOD & AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

<http://www.ncfar.org>

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NATIONAL



C-FAR

**THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR
FOOD & AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

Program:

SOLVING AFRICA'S WEED PROBLEM

*Key to Improving Women's Lives
and Increasing Crop Production*

June 28, 2010

PROGRAM

Welcome and Introduction

DR. LEE VAN WYCHEN
NATIONAL C-FAR REPRESENTATIVE

Distinguished Speaker

LEONARD GIANESSI
Director, Crop Protection Research Institute
CropLife Foundation

Open Forum

Closing

DR. LEE VAN WYCHEN

NATIONAL C-FAR IS a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based and customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research and extension community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension and education. For additional information, go to www.ncfar.org; or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director at tom@vanarsdall.com.

ABSTRACT

Solving the weed problem in Africa is critical if farmers are to attain optimal yields and gain the full value of additional use of fertilizer, irrigation and improved seeds. African farmers lose 20-100% of their potential crop production due to uncontrollable weeds. Fields are often abandoned or never planted due to weed infestations. The primary method of weed control by smallholder farmers in Africa is hand weeding with short handled tools. Women and children spend billions of hours in the drudgery of weeding fields by hand. Because of labor cost and shortage and other demands on farmers' time, not enough weeding is being done or is being done too late to prevent serious yield losses. Farmers are reluctant to apply fertilizer because weeds would be further stimulated and even more hand weeding would be required. The spraying of herbicides to remove weeds from African farm fields is a viable and proven technology which could be readily adopted with subsequent large yield increase. Herbicides have been tested for forty years in Africa and have been widely-adopted by large-scale commercial farmers but not by smallholders, who lack training in their use and ready access. Research has shown that, if smallholders used herbicides, there would be a 90% reduction in the hours required for weeding. To address these constraints, CropLife Foundation (CLF) and CNFA, Inc. have launched a pilot project in Kenya and Malawi to demonstrate the feasibility and impact of the proper use of herbicides. Demonstration plots have been supported with products and technical support provided by five CropLife member companies. Four US land grant University weed scientists have been supported with federal funds as volunteers to visit and aid in the research demonstration plot work. Increased funding is being sought to expand the project and increase the number of cooperating US weed scientists.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Leonard Gianessi is the Director of the Crop Protection Research Institute, a research unit of the CropLife Foundation, and has served in that capacity since 2004. For the past thirty years, Gianessi has held research and program management positions with non-profit, non-advocacy think tanks in Washington, DC, including the National Bureau of Economic Research, The Urban Institute, Resources for the Future, and the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy. Leonard has also worked as a consultant to the OECD. For the past 15 years, Leonard's research has focused on the uses and benefits of agricultural pesticides in the United States and around the world. Mr. Gianessi has testified several times before congressional committees, conducted numerous seminars for the EPA, and made more than 150 presentations at scientific conferences and other forums. Leonard's research projects are supported financially by private industry. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Public Affairs at George Washington University.