

Our March Member Profile is of Mr. Eric Johnson. Eric is a Research Officer with the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan. Read more about Eric below.

Occupation: Research Officer, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Saskatchewan

Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:

I began my career in 1982 working as an extension specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture in Unity followed by a transfer to North Battleford in 1989. In 1996, I took a secondment with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Scott, SK working as a weed biologist. I returned to the University of Saskatchewan in 1998 and completed my M.Sc. in weed science in 2001. I became a full-time AAFC employee in 2001 and took over as Officer-In-Charge later in the decade. During my tenure with AAFC, I was also Test Site Manager for the Pesticide Minor Use Program from its inception until my departure in 2015. I joined the University of Saskatchewan in 2015.

How did you become involved with CWSS and when?

I first became involved during my secondment years (1996 – 2001). At this time, it was still the Expert Committee on Weeds. I was the Provincial Extension Rep from 1988 to 1989. I have been a very active member of CWSS-SCM since its inception in 2002.

What has the extent of your involvement been?

I have sat on many committees and served on the executive for 10 years. My first executive position was Publications Director from 2003 to 2008. In that time period, I was involved in the publication of six monographs in the Topics in Canadian Weed Science series. In 2013, I rejoined the executive as 2nd VP, and served as President in 2015. I have been involved in four Local Arrangement Committees as well. Most recently, I have updated the history of CWSS-SCM to include the years 2002 to the present. I hope to get that posted on the website soon.

(Editor's Note: Eric is also a Fellow of the CWSS!)

Favorite memory/experience in your weed science career to date?

Well, I have many but I do have a soft spot for the work that I did with the Pesticide Minor Use Program. The Program was so well run and managed, and I got to interact with a number of interesting producers and producer groups. We worked on over 30 different crop types at Scott, and it was always challenging and fun to work with such a variety of different species.



What is your favorite weed and why?

Hmm, tough one. The past few years I have worked primarily on broadleaf weeds such as kochia, wild mustard, and cleavers. You have to admire kochia for its ability to quickly adapt to herbicides in a number of different ways. I also have a fondness for cow cockle, a weed that we unsuccessfully tried to develop into a domesticated crop (*Editor's note: The domesticated version was known as Prairie Carnation*). Finally, I also enjoy working with hemp, which grows as a weed in many parts of the world. (*Editor's note:*)

What are your career goals/future plans in weed science (if you are comfortable sharing)?

I just signed on for another 3-year term at the University of Saskatchewan. My main focus will be investigating novel integrated practices to manage herbicide resistant wild oat in wheat. At the end of my term, I will re-evaluate my goals and decide whether I want to carry on in weed science or call it a career.