

Name: Matt Underwood

Occupation: Territory Sales Representative

Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:

I first dipped my toes into weed science as a summer intern with DuPont Crop Protection during my undergrad. Prior to that summer job, my plan had been to return home to farm with my family, but that job quickly changed my outlook on future career possibilities, and ultimately led me down the path to my work roles that followed.

After finishing my undergrad degree at the University of Guelph, I completed a MSc degree at the U of G – Ridgetown Campus with Dr. Peter Sikkema and Dr. David Hooker. I then went on to work as a research technician at the U of G – Huron Research Station before transitioning to a role as a field biologist at Syngenta. Recently I moved into a sales role with Syngenta, advising farmers on weed control, disease management, and crop production.

I also work on my family's cash crop farm in my spare time, where I particularly enjoy scouting fields for weeds and diseases.

How did you become involved with CWSS and when?

I attended my first CWSS annual meeting in Montreal in 2014 as a grad student. I really enjoyed getting to network with grad students, industry reps, and scientists from across Canada and it was the warm reception of new grad students within CWSS that compelled me to become more involved with CWSS.

What has the extent of your involvement been? (i.e. have you served on committees/executive?)

I attended CWSS a few times as a grad student and presented some research from my MSc project. I have since attended as a representative for Syngenta and am serving my second term as a CropLife Canada Rep. Serving on the Board of Directors has been a great experience and it has allowed me to maintain connections with fellow CWSS members outside of the annual meeting.



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

As a summer intern at DuPont, I was responsible for driving to Northern Ontario to conduct trials to study the efficacy of an experimental herbicide on trees under powerlines and ditch weeds along roads. It was a far cry from the research in row crops that I was used to, and was neat to cross paths with moose, amongst other wildlife while in a Tyvek suit!

What is your favorite weed and why?

Milkweed is one of my favourites. It's not too often you smile when you see a weed, but being a main food source of Monarch butterflies, milkweed is a sign of hope that Monarch butterflies can make a resurgence. I have witnessed more milkweed in fence rows and ditches over the last few years, and it is exciting seeing the higher numbers of Monarch butterflies that accompany the return of milkweed.