Sharp-point Fluvellin: The Creeping Menace. John Roncoroni, University of California Cooperative Extension, Napa, CA

Sharppoint fluvellin [Kickxia eglantine(L.) Dumort.); and the family: Scrophulariaceae, has gone from what many growers considered a minor nuisance in the northern Napa and eastern Sonoma counties, to a weed that has exploded throughout the state. In some areas the infestations of this annual weed have become so thick that when the plant dies in the winter it leaves a 'skeleton' that catches fallen grape leaves. This barrier keeps herbicides from hitting the soil and may 'protect' small weeds from being hit by postemergence herbicide making the application ineffective.

This presentation summarizes several trials over a period of 9 years that describe the biology and control methods for fluvellin. We are just beginning to understand fluvellin biology as it relates to its growth in vineyards in northern California. Germination can occur throughout the year, except for the coldest part of winter. Germination that occurs in mid to late summer and throughout the fall is the most important. Vineyards that are routinely cultivated in the vine row will not have a large fluvellin problem. It is the vineyards that are 'no-till' under vine that may see large infestations of fluvellin.

Results: Fluvellin is not a 'good competitor', meaning that is less of a problem when weed control is not as effective against other weeds. In fact, in one trial fluellin was controlled very well in the Untreated Control plot. All other treatments included glyphosate which killed the grass and other weeds that were competing with the fluvellin. Long-lasting herbicides are important for fluvellin control because of its extended, late germination period. Trial results indicate that a postemergence treatment with glyphosate after leaf drop in late fall or early winter combined with a treatment in late winter(but before bud break) made up of a combination of glyphosate plus a burn-down herbicide plus a long lasting preemergence herbicide provides the best control of fluellin.