

Case Study
Dow AgroSciences Boxer Pesticide
– brand positioning and raising awareness

Introduction

Present in 58 per cent of the country's cereal fields, cleavers is one of the primary threats in arable farming rotations in the UK. Infestation from the weed can have dire effects and result in yield loss and reduced grain quality.

Dow Agrosciences – a leading provider of crop protection and pest management solutions in the UK – developed and launched Boxer, a new herbicide for early-season control primarily of cleavers, but also of other weeds including chickweed and mayweed. It entered an established market but had to be positioned as complementary to another Dow AgroSciences' herbicide – Starane – which is applied to crops later on in the season.

Objective

- Introduce Boxer as the most effective early-season product for the control of cleavers
- Maintain Starane's profile as the most effective mid-late season control herbicide for cleavers
- Fast-track Boxer through all stages from farmer awareness to testing, adoption and advocacy to other farmers
- Increase awareness of the implications of reduced dose rate
- Position Dow AgroSciences as the cleavers expert
- Maintain the profile of cleavers as the primary broad-leaved weed in cereals.

Strategy

From January to April 2000, those farmers who had switched to early applications – because of early germination patterns of cleavers on their farm, their cropping pattern, crop protection programmes or labour restrictions later in the season – were encouraged to change to Boxer via an intensive three-month media relations campaign.

Boxer was launched at a media briefing in Cambridge, which was targeted at the farmers via national and regional agricultural trade and farming interest publications using the following tools:

- Press releases
- Placed features
- Forward features
- Case studies
- Cleavers survey
- Press briefing
- Advertising campaign support.

Results

It was agreed that media coverage, and in particular the use of the brand name and delivery of key messages, would be the main measurement factor for the PR campaign.

During the three-month campaign, 33 articles were published in target media – 23 of which mentioned the product directly. Of the two key messages, the first was mentioned 19 times and second 27 times.



In more general terms, the Boxer campaign raised awareness of cleavers as a problem weed and provided valuable advice and solutions to help growers implement their cleavers control strategies.

Long-term, we believe the Boxer campaign 2000 helped to continue to raise awareness of cleavers as the most competitive broad-leaved weed in cereals, helping towards its ongoing control in the UK.