

Making a Difference

2013 Motley County Cotton and Alternative Crops Program Developed by Ryan Martin, Motley County Extension Agent

Relevance

Cotton production in Motley County accounts for more than \$8 million or 44% of the ag income for the county. With around 25,000 acres per year planted in cotton, this is an important part of the agricultural makeup of the county. Changes made by producers in their production and management practices can have a large impact on the agricultural income of the county as well as each producer's personal income. The changing dynamics of cotton production makes the job of the producer very hard unless they keep current with new technology and information. Educational programs were developed to help producers stay on top and offer information about alternative crops that can supplement income. These programs were aimed towards all cotton producers in Motley County and surrounding areas.

Response

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Motley County developed a series of programs to address this relevant issue. These programs were targeted towards producers in Motley and surrounding counties. The programs offered were as follows:

- Rolling Plains Chemical Conference
- Rolling Plains Cotton Variety and Water Conservation Seminar
- Private Applicator Trainings
- Worker Protection Standard Training
- Cotton Variety Trial (result demonstration)
- Multi-County Cotton Turn Row Tours
- Motley County Cotton Tours
- Drought Management Meetings
- Newspaper articles
- Producer Newsletters
- One-on-one assistance with local producers

Results

In order to determine programmatic results of the Motley County Cotton and Alternative Crops program, a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered to program participants. A total of 17 out of 17 (100%) returned on the retrospective post instrument. The results are as follows:

Topics	Before	After	Change	% Change
Knowledge of cotton variety characteristics such as: biotechnology traits, storm resistance, maturity levels and variety performance.	2.6	3.9	1.3	50%
Know new chemical available for cotton production	2.8	3.8	1.0	36%
Understand that proper selection of chemicals will help minimize impact on benefits	2.6	3.9	1.3	50%
Know what alternative crops are suitable for the Rolling Plains Area.	2.5	3.8	1.3	52%
Understand that there are available computer software programs that can help me enhance marketing of cotton crop	2.6	3.8	1.2	46%
Understand the laws and regulations regarding chemical usage in cotton and alternative crops	2.7	3.8	1.1	41%

Open ended questions:

The information presented will help me make better decisions?

17 out of 17 responded – Yes

Demographics. The following data describes the participants of the Cotton and Alternative Crops program in Motley County.

- 14 out of 17 (82%) respondents indicated they are full time farmers
- 3 out of 17 (18%) respondents indicated they are part time farmers
- The participants farm a total of 15,100 acres of cotton and 3,300 acres of sorghum.

Conclusion

Future programming efforts will continue to address issues and present information concerning new cotton varieties, traits, disease management, soil fertility, alternative crops and address new emerging issues. The Motley County Agriculture Committee will also assist in determining issues and emerging needs that will be addressed in future programs.