

Making a Difference

2016 Row Crop Production Education Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:

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Relevance

Wharton County ranks 17th in the State in total agricultural receipts, and 2nd in the State in total value of crops, including nursery and greenhouse production. The 2012 Census of Agriculture for Wharton County reports \$373,637,000 in total agricultural receipts. Cotton, corn, grain sorghum, and soybeans are among the chief agricultural products in Wharton County, totaling 188,686.11 acres for the 2016 crop production year. As costs of production continue to increase, applied research is needed to evaluate new emerging technologies to determine their feasibility in local farming systems. In order for growers to maintain profitability and long-term sustainability of production, educational programs in herbicide weed resistance, variety selection, emerging insect and disease issues and fertility need to be available at the local level.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee planned, conducted, and evaluated educational programs and applied research projects for the 2016 crop production year. An annual Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference was held on January 14, 2016 as a multi-county program in El Campo, Texas (Wharton County) – Wharton, Matagorda, and Colorado County cooperating. On August 12, 2016 Wharton County held a Cotton Defoliation Plot Tour to showcase how sixteen(16) different cotton defoliant might perform with the current cotton crop, under current growing conditions.

Three committee members also served as Result Demonstration Cooperators. The following result demonstrations were conducted in 2016:

- 2016 Wharton County Grain Sorghum Uniform Hybrid Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Duane Lutringer – El Campo, Texas
- 2016 Wharton County Corn Uniform Hybrid Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Terry Marek – Pierce, Texas
- 2016 Replicated Agronomic Cotton Evaluation (RACE) Trial with cooperating grower and committee member Keith Kresta – El Campo, Texas
- 2016 Cotton Defoliation Study with cooperating grower Michael Watz – El Campo, Texas

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Results

Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of the Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference, a retrospective post evaluation instrument was mailed 90 days later to a representative sample of 54 of the 115 who attended the conference. 23 of 54 (42%) completed evaluations.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
How to properly assess the designation of specific grain sorghum as having substantial tolerance/resistance to the sugarcane aphid	2..20	3.13	42.2%
Knowledge that TDA made effective on December 18, 2015 the following exceptions from the Regulated Herbicide Classification: <i>(A) 2,4-D or dicamba when used in accordance with the approved product label for transgenic auxin herbicide tolerant crops; and</i> <i>(B) applied by ground application equipment only; and</i> <i>(C) applied when winds do not exceed 10 miles per hour.</i>	2.30	3.39	47.3%
Knowledge of current applied research being conducted to evaluated the practical use of UAV Drones in agriculture	1.6	3.04	90%
Knowledge of current research being conducted in Texas regarding potassium fertilizer rates in cotton.	2.0	3.04	52%

Cotton Defoliation Field Day

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was provided to a census of the 8 producers who attended the August 12, 2016 Cotton Defoliation Plot Tour. An online evaluation instrument was utilized and produced though Qualtrics. The evaluation instrument was emailed ninety (90) days following the plot tour. 3 of 5 (60%) completed the Qualtrics, electronic evaluation. An online evaluation instrument was selected over an “in person” instrument to better measure best practices adopted rather than intent to adopt. 2 of 3 (66%) indicated that they have adopted a minimum of one best management practice as a result of attending the Cotton Defoliation Field Day. Evaluation respondents report a total of 5,000 acres managed, and a total economic impact of \$46,275 as a result of the research data and education received from the 2016 Cotton Defoliation Trial.

Result Demonstrations and Applied Research

Results for all applied research projects conducted in Wharton County are posted, and can be downloaded at <http://varietytesting.tamu.edu>