



N.C. Cooperative Extension
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To: Pasquotank Producers

From: Alton E. Wood, Jr.
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Re: Upcoming Producer Meetings
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Upcoming Producer Meetings

In late January a listing of all the 2020 Pasquotank Producer Winter Meetings was sent out. If you have lost your copy, you can call the office for a copy or find it by using the following link: <https://pasquotank.ces.ncsu.edu/2019/12/2020-pasquotank-producer-winter-meeting-schedule/>.

There are many benefits to attending these meetings such as finding out the latest information on the topics covered, and earning pesticide credits. **For 2 of the meetings, there will be an additional benefit that you will have to be in attendance to find out about.**

Survey Assessing Internet Connectivity from NC Farmers

Based on comments of people in the area and on personal experience, internet service is an issue. Below is information about a survey on this topic and how you can be involved in the survey (online) to provide information on internet connectivity.

Please complete this 5-minute survey. This survey gathers data on internet connectivity from North Carolina farmers which will be used to inform research and policy recommendations to assist communities where internet access is inadequate.

Survey is located at: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agbroadband>.



Deadline for Coverage on Spring Crops: Feb. 28th

The deadline for crop insurance coverage on spring crops is, whether new and existing policies, is February 28, 2020. Review your yield history and input cost needed to make decisions about federally subsidized crop insurance before Feb 28th.

2020 NE Ag Expo Small Grain Field Day

The Northeast Ag Expo Small Grain Field Day will be on Wednesday, February 19th at Lynn Hobbs' Farm 185 Spivey Road Hobbsville, NC. Registration and trade show will be from 8:30am to 9:45am followed by opening remarks from 9:45am to 10:00am and presentations by speakers from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. The field day will provide information on such topics as diseases of wheat, varieties, plant nutrition including foliar fertilizers, and what we need to be doing from now until harvest. There will be 2 hours of commercial pesticide applicator credits for the categories N, O, and D as well as 2 hours of X credits for farmers. Also, there will be certified crop advisor credits available. Please call the Gates County Extension Center (252-357-1400) to pre-register.

Wheat Crop: 2020 Pasquotank Wheat Survey Plus More

What acres of wheat that we did plant have had a very difficult time. **Dr. Post, Ryan Heiniger and I went out and looked at 6 fields. The tiller counts ranged from 23 per square foot to 98 per square foot with 3 of the fields being below 50 tillers per square foot and 3 fields above 50 tillers per square foot.** Those fields under 50 tillers per square foot were planted after the first of November when temperatures were below normal and rainfall was frequent, keeping the soil very wet. Some fields were very clean with regards to weeds with some of those fields having had a pre-emergence herbicide while others had significant numbers of winter annual weeds such as henbit, chickweed, and bluegrass. So, what should we be doing this time of year?

First, we need to be checking tiller numbers and fertilizing appropriately. If your tiller numbers are below 60 tillers per square foot and/or do not have good color, I would recommend applying 30 to 40 pounds of nitrogen per acre now. This will allow opportunity for plants to increase tiller numbers and improve nitrogen in plant tissues to ensure profitable yields. If you have not applied any sulfur to your wheat as pre-plant fertilizer, I would recommend using a nitrogen source that includes sulfur, since we have had a wet growing season so far. Also, if you have wheat that is on organic ground, I would make certain to apply copper.

Second, we need to be checking for and controlling weeds. Do not let the weeds get too big because they are harder to control. Depending on the weeds you have, your best herbicide choice can vary. Among the weeds to be looking for are chickweed, henbit, annual ryegrass, annual bluegrass, wild mustard and cutleaf evening primrose. Refer to the 2020 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual or contact your county office for herbicide recommendations. You can find the manual at the following web address: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/north-carolina-agricultural-chemicals-manual>.

Third, we need to be scouting for other pests such as foliar diseases and insects. We did not see any diseases or insects with the county survey nor have I heard any “rumbling” from other parts of the state nor from other states in the southeast portion of the United States with regards to foliar diseases. We just need to be vigilant on these pests. As we warm up in the spring scout for powdery mildew first. Look down near the base of thick canopies for a powdery white residue on the leaves.

Fourth, keep your eye on the wheat market. If a marketing opportunity arises, take advantage of it. Although we may not know where the wheat market will take us with regard to prices, recent price rallies have given us encouragement. If you know what your yields are normally for wheat as well as what it costs you to raise that wheat, then you are better prepared to make a marketing decision. As I have heard it said, “You cannot go wrong, if you can pencil in a profit.” Visit the following link to work on pencil-out budgets for your operation: <https://cals.ncsu.edu/are-extension/grain-budgets/>.

Wheat has the longest growing season of any of the crops we grow (compared to soybean and corn) and it can be forgotten until we get to the jointing phase of the crop. There are things we can do prior to jointing to help ensure profitable yields.

2020 Survey of Soybean Producers’ Practices

At the January 14th soybean meeting, which Dr. Rachel Vann was the key speaker, a survey was conducted. Although the results are based on a total of 22 people (respondents), this captures a part of growers from the county.

There were three topics covered in the survey. Questions 1 and 2 deal with the early maturing, early planted soybean system. **Of those that responded to the question, “Do you use the early maturing, early planted system (MG 3 and early MG 4 planted before May 1st)?”, 45 percent indicated that they used it.** This was not surprising to me. **Question 2 addresses the reason why 55 percent do not use the system with the top three reasons being “does not fit my farming operation,” followed by “do not want to stop harvesting corn to pick soybean” and “do not have a drier and grain bins.”** These are very good reasons for not using this system because the time of year when the soybean crop would be getting ready (late August to early September) is when conditions are most favorable for yield loss, due to hurricanes, and decrease of quality, due to frequent rains and high humidity.

Dr. Vann’s multi-site test that was conducted in 2019 will be conducted over several years looking at late MG 2 to MG 7 varieties over a range of planting dates (mid-March to late-July) and seeding rates. The purpose of this test is to determine the optimal maturity group and seeding rate combinations to use across a wide range in planting dates. Preliminary results show that some maturity groups do better at certain planting dates than others, but in a couple of more years that should be a clearer picture, which may result in new Extension recommendations. The ultimate goal is to use this data to develop a grower decision support tool that can be used to advise growers on the best MG and seeding rate to use at their desired planting date. In 2019,

the research showed higher yields with later maturity varieties at very early planting dates (mid-March to mid-April). **If it is found that we can use some later maturing varieties at the early planting dates and get a major yield increase, it may be that growers that are not currently using the early planting system may be able to do so because current hindrances may be diminished.**

The third survey question deals with the source of information that soybean producers use in selecting varieties. More than 65 percent of the growers used the NC OVT, NE Ag Expo soybean variety trials and farmer-initiated variety evaluations as their source of information in variety selection. This was very encouraging. In addition to these sources of information, there is currently a selection tool for soybean varieties that can be found at the following link:

<https://officialvarietytesting.ces.ncsu.edu/soybean-variety-selection-tool/>.

This selection tool allows growers to filter the OVT data uses parameters such as maturity group, herbicide trait, company, disease resistance, and more. This helps narrow down the number of varieties a grower must compare for yield data and is an excellent resource.

Question 4 asked growers to indicate what was their most important limiting factors for soybean yield. Not surprisingly, growers said that the **most important limiting yield factor was weather.** Although growers cannot influence weather, we may have other strategies such as using avoidance of unfavorable periods of weather by using different planting dates or range of maturities, improve available water by disrupting hardpans that may limit rooting depth, use varieties that have traits such as drought tolerance, etc. A couple of the other factors' growers mentioned as less limiting factors, such as nematodes and diseases, are things that we may be able to manage via variety selection and/or crop protection products.

Testing for Commercial or Private Pesticide Applicator License

The Pasquotank County Center is hosting two testings for people desiring to obtain a commercial pesticide or private (farmer) pesticide license. The test will be held on **Wednesday, March 11th, and Wednesday, November 18th.** The testing will take place at the Pasquotank County Center located at **1209 McPherson St, Elizabeth City and will begin at 1:00pm.** Anyone coming for the testing should bring a picture ID and a calculator. Also, if you are taking the test for a government job you should also bring the address for your place of employment since it will be needed when you sign up to take the test. **A review session in preparation for the testing will be held on Tuesday, March 3rd, and Friday November 13th, with both of them being from 9:00am – 12:00 noon at the Pasquotank County Center.** If you plan to attend any of these, please call the Extension Center at 252-338-3954 to register.

Reporting Impacts of 2019 Extension Programs

Below are just a few of the success stories of 2019 Extension programs that were conducted in Pasquotank County or as a team effort with the six Extension Centers in northeast North Carolina. One of the key parts of programming within Extension is that impacts of educational programs are communicated to our stakeholders. We hope that you find this information useful.

Pesticide Schools Help Insure Properly Trained Pesticide Applicators and Provide Economic Impact

Because of the agriculture industry, the green industry (i.e. landscape management businesses, etc.) and other professionals who have jobs involving the use of pesticides, there is a need for pesticide schools which will afford these individuals the opportunity to obtain proper credentials.

The Pasquotank County Center of NC Cooperative Extension provides educational programs for individuals, including people who need pesticide licenses for their jobs. Individuals are trained in the proper use of pesticides as well as other techniques/tools for managing pests. On August 7th and 8th 2019, the Pasquotank Cooperative Extension conducted a pesticide school jointly with the NC State University Pesticide Safety Education Program and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Pesticide Section. This allowed attendees to obtain needed training as well as to be tested. **Of 19 people who were tested, 11 people were certified to be applicators/dealers with 6 of them being commercial pesticide applicators and 5 being private pesticide applicators. There was an overall passing rate of 86%. The economic impact of this pesticide school to those people who were certified as well as to the region was \$186,000 in preserved wages.**

Pesticide Collection Day Protects Environment and Prevents Unnecessary Costs

With Pasquotank County being located in a region of the state with many acres of surface waters as well as a shallow groundwater table, measures must be taken and safeguards in place to prevent contamination of these important natural resources. The Pasquotank Extension Center partnered with the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Pesticide Disposal Assistance Program to conduct a pesticide collection day on Wednesday, October 23rd. This program provided the opportunity for farmers and homeowners to dispose of unwanted pesticides free-of-charge in an environmentally sound manner. **A total of 319 pesticide containers filled with pesticides weighing 3,037 pounds were collected. This program saved Pasquotank County at least \$60,000, since improper disposal of this large volume could have resulted in a much higher cost if cleanup was required.**

2019 Northeast Ag Expo Summer Field Day

Growers and other members of the agricultural community need up to date information on soybean and corn production, technologies, and crop-related practices. The Northeast Ag Expo is comprised of a team of Extension agents from Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Pasquotank, and Perquimans counties. This team partnered with a grower-cooperator in Currituck County, agribusinesses, commodity groups, NC State University Extension Specialists, and Virginia Tech Specialists to conduct the 2019 Northeast Ag Expo Summer Field Day. Topics related to corn production included: high yield management, stink bug management, fungicide application, and weed control. Topics related to soybean production included planting date, fungicide application, fertility, and foliar fertilizers. **There were 267 in attendance with 57% being farmers, 30% being agribusiness, and 13% being from the government. The participants represented 104,143 acres of soybeans and 180,374 acres of corn. Ninety-eight farmers received pesticide license credits. When participants were asked if they had benefited from the information provided at previous field days, the total economic value due to increased bushels/acre was valued at \$5,142,904.06.**

Salt Intrusion to Coastal NC Agricultural Fields

In early 2018, several crop producers in Hyde, Pasquotank, and Camden reported problems growing crops (mainly corn and soybeans) on formerly productive lands. Agriculture plays a key economic role in these northeastern coastal counties. The agents reached out to a crops specialist and a water quality area specialized agent (ASA). Early site investigations revealed elevated soil salts. The ASA reached out to two East Carolina University hydrogeologists, as there was a possibility that the salts were coming up from the ground and not as a result of ocean over wash. A Soil & Water Conservation staff member from Camden was also part of our project group. The Extension members obtained a Gore grant, which provided initial funding to do further investigations. After Hurricane Florence, the ECU researchers obtained an NSF Rapid grant, that used information gained from the Gore grant as part of the justification of need. These funds provided automated sampling at the project sites. To-date, several projects posters have been presented at state and national conferences. The poster presented at the NC Assoc. of County Ag Agents conference won first-place in the Applied Research category. A field day held at the Hyde County site had 73 attendees, 52% of whom stated they had some experience with salt impacts on cropland. Overall, they rated the field day as good and very good. The event elevated producer and agency awareness in the region. In Pasquotank County information on the salt water intrusion situation has been shared at producer meetings and the Pasquotank Farm Tour. This project continues to collect data so as to determine the dynamics of this situation and how it can affect agricultural lands and other land uses.