Precision Ag Needs Assessment
Southwest Alabama
March 2009

On March 2-3, 2009, the Precision Ag Team conducted a series of meetings in Southwest Alabama. Farmers attending these meetings were asked to provide information about their adoption of various precision agriculture technologies through the use of an Automated Response System (ARS). The overview and assessment were conducted using Microsoft PowerPoint and software and keypads from Turning Point Technologies. A brief overview of each precision agriculture technology was presented prior to the participants responding to interactive slides through the use of the ResponseCard® ARS keypad.

Thirty-two farms participated (participation was voluntary). Graphical results from the needs assessment are on the following pages.

Results summary:

- Over 45% of farmers are currently using grid or zone sampling. An additional 28% plan to adopt within the next two years.
- Over 60% of farmers are currently using RTK GPS. An additional 20% plan to adopt within the next two years. Auto-steer ranked highest as the precision ag technology most likely to impact profitability.
- Of the 37% of farmers who currently have yield monitors, less than half use the data after they finish harvest.
- Almost 29% of respondents use an ag GIS package.
- Over 91% of farmers believe that precision ag practices will increase their profitability.

Mention of trade names and commercial products is for informational purposes and does not necessarily imply endorsement by Auburn University or the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.
Are you utilizing grid or zone sampling on your farm?

- Yes: 45.7%
- No, but I plan to in the next 2 years: 28.6%
- No, and I don't plan to: 11.4%
- N/A: 11.4%

Are you using a lightbar for GPS guidance?

- Yes: 68.6%
- No, but I plan to in the next 2 years: 11.4%
- No, and I don't plan to: 11.4%
- N/A: 11.4%

Do you currently use RTK GPS technology?

- Yes: 60.0%
- No, but I plan to in the next 2 years: 11.4%
- No, and I don't plan to: 20.0%
- N/A: 8.6%
Which 2 PA technologies will have the most impact on your profitability?

- Precision Soil Sampling: 34.4%
- Auto-steer Guidance: 20.3%
- Lightbar Guidance: 15.6%
- Variable-Rate Technology: 14.1%
- Yield Monitor: 11.3%
- Auto-Swath Technology: 9.4%
- Ag GIS software: 1.6%
- N/A: 1.6%

Which are 2 main reasons for using precision ag?

- Increase yield: 38.7%
- Reduce costs: 38.7%
- Imporve overall management: 11.3%
- Improve environmental stewardship: 8.1%
- Better knowledge of field variability: 3.2%
- N/A: 0.0%

What is the best way(s) you learn about new technologies?

- Hand-on training in the field: 33.3%
- Reading: 22.2%
- Internet: 24.7%
- Attending a workshop: 11.1%
- Talking to others: 8.6%