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September News Letter 2007

UPCOMING PRODUCTION MEETINGS

Fairhope Gulf Coast Research and Extension Center Row Crop Field Day
Date: September 11, 2007
Place: Gulf Coast Research and Extension Center on Highway 104 near Fairhope.
Time: 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.
Tour: On station of soybean, cotton and peanut research tests.
Speakers: Malcomb Pegues, with GCREC. Dr. Austin Hagan, AU Peanut Pathologist, Dr. Dale Monks, AU Cotton Agronomist, Dr. Kathy Lawrence, AU Cotton Pathologist, Dr. Ed Sikora, AU Soybean Pathologist, Dr. Dennis Delaney, AU Soybean Agronomist and Dr. Barry Tillman, UFL Peanut Plant Breeder.
Sponsored Dinner. For more information contact GCREC at (251) 928-2740

Live and Learn Luncheon:
Date: September 11, 2007
Place: Road Kill Café on Highway 98 in downtown Elberta
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Dr. Barry Tillman, University of Florida Peanut Plant Breeder will eat lunch with us. Shortly after lunch we will tour the On Farm Late Season Peanut Variety Test that is being conducted in Elberta on Bitto Farm. Dr. Tillman and Dr. Dan Gorbet have several newly released peanut varieties: FL07, York and McLoud.

ROW CROP ACRES FOR SOUTHWEST ALABAMA 2007

County	Peanuts	Cotton	Corn	Soybeans	Grain Sorghum	Wheat grain	Oats grain
Baldwin	22,309	9,049	3,830	8,734	600	5,958	2,000
Escambia	11,620	14,786	4,068	4,864		3,627	2,048
Monroe	4,821	20,739	1,793	2,050		1,732	2,014
Mobile	5,614	6,000	1,027	460	18		
Conecuh	455	4,694	1,676	170		200	150
Butler	928	475	1,720	1,211	20	204	
Washington	1,676	555	921	121		98	11
Clarke	88	970	88	1			
Total Acres	47,511	57,268	15,123	17,611	638	11,819	6,223

Total Row Crop Acres: 156,193

Changes in Crop Acres From 2006 to 2007

Crop	2006	2007	Difference
Peanuts	44,211	47,511	+ 3,300
Cotton	74,943	57,268	- 17,675
Corn	8,611	15,123	+ 6,512
Soybeans	5,746	17,611	+ 11,865
Grain Sorghum	471	638	+ 167
Wheat	7,468	11,819	+ 4,351
Oats	6,106	6,223	+ 117
Total Row Crop Acres	147,566	156,193	+ 8,627

Drastic changes were made in crop acres that growers planted this year in Alabama. Peanut acres in Alabama were decreased by 20 %. In Southwest Alabama growers increased their peanut acres by 9 %. Cotton acres in Alabama have decreased by 40 %. Southwest decreased only by 30 %. Corn acres in Southwest increased by 43 %. Soybean acres increased by 67 % and wheat increased by 37 %. Cotton was the only crop to take a loss in acres in Southwest, Al. It is expected that wheat acres will take another large increase in acres this fall planting season.

THE HULL SCRAPE METHOD

Determine When to Dig Your Peanuts Based On Science Rather Than Emotion

Alabama peanut growers first began using the hull- scrape method in 1988 to determine when to dig. Now, nearly 70 percent of Alabama growers use the method. Hull-scrape use has been even greater in counties where wet pod blasters were available. Instead of the wet pod blaster, most people are now using a pressure sprayer to scrape their peanuts. This works great.

Correct use of the method can provide an accurate, reliable picture or profile of how the crop is set. From this profile we can project the best harvest date, schedule which fields to harvest first, and determine how production practices such as irrigation have affected the crop.

Digging at the best time is extremely important for achieving maximum yield, grade, dollar return, and peanut quality. It is not unusual for peanuts to gain from 300-500 lbs. and 1-2 percent in grade in the 1 ½ week period before the best harvest date. Research over a four year time period showed that: Peanuts dug 2 weeks too early caused a 744 lb yield loss. At 17 cents a pound that would be a $126 per acre loss. Peanuts dug 1 week early would loose 253 pounds. That would be a $43 loss. Peanuts dug 1 week late would be a 500 pound loss. That would be a $ 85 loss. Much later than two weeks late you risk losing all of your peanuts. It is safer and better to dig your peanuts a few days too early than to dig too late.

Remember that dollars lost represent the loss of clear profit as no other input is required other than digging at the right time.

Keep in mind that the hull scrape method only represents pod maturity – an important factor, but not the only factor to consider for projecting when to dig. Other factors which may influence the harvest date are:

1. Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV), White mold and other diseases. Generally we disregard the effect of these diseases as it is the sound mature peanut on healthy plants that you are harvesting.
2. Conditions of the vines. Severe leafspot, leaf defoliation or drought may require digging earlier than projected.
3. Weather outlook. If the forecast is for an extended period of bad weather covering the projected harvest dates, it may be best to dig slightly early, as rapid peg deterioration can occur after extended rainfall.
4. Length of harvest. If it will take 3 weeks to dig the crop, you obviously will have to start early and go late. Ranking the fields will help determine the best order of digging.

When Do You Make the Last Leafspot Spray on Peanuts?

It is very important to keep the leaves on a peanut plant in order to get the maximum yield in peanuts. The decision to spray leafspot with a fungicide or not is important all during the season. However, toward the end of the growing season the decision to spray can make or cost a lot of money. The fungus organism that causes leafspot takes 20 days to affect the plant. During hot, humid weather conditions it takes 14 days from the time

the leafspot spore lands on a leaf until it makes a spot and then 6 more days before that leaf will fall off the vine. During those 20 days that particular leaf will be putting its sap into the vine and down into the pods. If you are within 20 days of harvesting your peanuts, you would not benefit from spraying. You would only spray for leafspot if due to weather or age of your peanuts you thought it would be more than 20 days before you could harvest.

Nematodes in Your Fields

This of course is a very busy time for farmers, but August and September are the best times to take nematode samples. This will help you determine if a nematicide is needed in those fields for the next year.

Soybean Asian Rust Update:

Soybean Asian Rust was found on June 25, 2007 at the GCREC sentinel plot in Baldwin County. During the fourth week of August rust was found in Mobile, Washington, Monroe, Escambia, Covington and Marengo Counties. The hot dry weather slowed the progress of the rust, but apparently did not stop the rust. At this time growers in all surrounding counties with soybeans in stages of growth (bloom through pod fill) should consider applying a triazole fungicide (Folicur, Top Guard, Laredo, Caramba, Alto, Orius, Punchline) or tank mix (Quadris or Headline) with one of the previously mentioned triazole fungicides. In central and north Alabama counties if weather continues to be conducive to other soybean diseases (such as Frog-eye and Cercospera) and your crop yield looks good, it most likely would pay to apply Quadris or Headline to control these diseases. This would also prevent the Asian Rust if it did arrive in your area. The Auburn University Soybean Rust Hotline (Dr. Ed Sikora) is 800-446-0388. View the Soybean Rust PIPE website: http://www.sbrusa.net for frequent updates.

Wheat and Oat Production

DEEP TILLAGE IS VITAL TO SMALL GRAINS: Small grains respond to deep tillage. This is especially important if the winter is too wet or the spring is too dry during the grain fill period. Preparing a good seedbed by deep tillage will usually result in 18-20 bushels yield increase over just discing. It is important to disc first and then chisel plow. Discing after deep tillage recompacts the soil and essentially negates the positive effects of the deep tillage trip.

WEED MANAGEMENT: Presently there are no pre-plant or at-plant herbicides for use on small grains. Having a clean seed bed at planting is one of the best methods for keeping your crop weed free. Discing to prepare the seed bed or using burn down chemicals to eliminate the weeds prior to planting will help immensely.

COTTON DEFOLIATION and LATE SEASON WEED CONTROL

Dr. Mike Patterson, Extension Weed Scientist

Cotton defoliation varies each year, primarily due to the condition of the crop and environment. Both the crop and the environment are stressed in 2007. Unless you have a good cotton crop that is on target for September maturity, we should be talking about late October-November defoliation (probably most of the state). Many fields will need to be taken into late October in order to obtain significant cotton yields. Temperatures

generally begin to decline in Alabama during October and the day length shortens. The activity of most cotton harvest aides decreases as temperatures drop from 80 degrees F. Above 80 F you should expect the optimum activity from a product. Extremely high temperatures (>90 F.) can cause some harvest aide materials to stick cotton leaves instead of defoliating them. The use of ethephon (Prep, etc.) in Alabama cotton has generally provided better overall defoliation and optimum once-over harvest. This may be the case in 2007, but carrying the crop out into cooler weather will call for higher rates of ethephon than we would normally use. Fortunately, the price of ethephon has decreased significantly in the past few years. I would recommend using at least 1.5 pounds (3 pints) per acre and would consider one-half gallon per acre if the mood swayed me. The newer fast acting defoliants like Aim, Blizzard, ET, and Resource all work better when mixed with ethephon. These products alone only provide cotton defoliation with little regrowth suppression or boll opening. They can be cost effective and do work quickly. Def is an old standby and a little of this added to ethephon + thidiazuron (Dropp, etc.) will help overall performance in cooler weather. Thidiazuron is the only product that has significant regrowth suppression activity. Cotton regrowth after initial defoliation is largely dependent on the crop and soil moisture conditions at harvest. Dry crop at defoliation and for several days afterward means you get about 100% regrowth suppression from just about any treatment. Defoliation of a dry crop followed by large rain means you can't stop regrowth regardless of the material used. The best scenario for harvest aide treatment is to apply a mixture of materials that defoliate and open all harvestable bolls within 10 days and you harvest on day 11. Activated ethephon products like Finish and FirstPick work faster than straight ethephon products. They are the Cadillac's of the boll openers, but cost more. I have seen these products open bolls within eight days, a feat that may be important if a freeze is coming. Remember the number one rule of spraying a harvest aide on cotton—you only defoliate or open what the spray hits, so do a good job of covering the plant.

Late season morningglories and other weeds can cause problems at harvest. Envoke can be sprayed over-the-top up to 60 days prior to cotton harvest and will provide good activity on morningglories that have climbed over the cotton. Glyphosate (Roundup, Touchdown, etc.) can be sprayed over-the-top of Roundup Ready cotton that has 20 percent or greater open bolls, assuming no gaps in fruiting. If there is a gap with no fruit between the lower and upper bolls, then wait until the upper harvestable bolls are physiologically mature (slice the topmost harvestable bolls to check for brown seed coats) before applying glyphosate. Roundup Ready Flex cotton can be sprayed with glyphosate until 60% open. Glyphosate will start drying grasses and other weeds but may take a couple of weeks to exert its full influence.

Richard Petcher
Regional Extension Agent
Agronomic Crops

Peanut Planting Record-Harvest Guide

Date planted _____ Days of age _____

		120 Days		130 Days		135 Days	
April	7	August	5	August	15	August	20
April	10	August	8	August	18	August	23
April	13	August	11	August	21	August	26
April	16	August	14	August	24	August	29
April	19	August	17	August	27	September	2
April	22	August	20	August	30	September	5
April	25	August	23	September	2	September	7
April	28	August	26	September	5	September	10
May	1	August	29	September	8	September	13
May	4	September	1	September	11	September	16
May	7	September	4	September	14	September	19
May	10	September	7	September	17	September	22
May	13	September	10	September	20	September	25
May	16	September	13	September	23	September	28
May	19	September	16	September	26	October	1
May	22	September	19	September	29	October	4
May	25	September	22	October	2	October	6
May	28	September	25	October	5	October	10
May	31	September	28	October	8	October	13
June	3	October	1	October	11	October	17
June	6	October	4	October	14	October	19
June	9	October	7	October	17	October	22
June	12	October	10	October	20	October	25
June	15	October	13	October	23	October	28
June	18	October	16	October	26	October	31
June	21	October	19	October	29	November	4

Late Season Soybean Management

Dennis Delaney, Extension Specialist – Soybeans & Conservation Cropping Systems

We're quickly getting into the tail-end of the soybean growing season now. A few early soybeans have been harvested, but we've still got most in the field. A lot of these were planted late after wheat or just after we finally got some rain, so they might still be in early stages. We've found Asian Soybean Rust in several counties in south and central Alabama, so we need to be protecting this crop in those and adjacent counties with fungicides from bloom through pod-fill. See the IPM Guide for guidelines, visit http://www.sbrusa.net/, or call Dr. Ed Sikora's Hotline 1-800-446-0388.

In addition, keep an eye out for insects like loopers, podworms, and stinkbugs as other crops dry down. We don't need to loose sight of our traditional pests by concentrating on rust only. Most labels allow tank-mixing fungicides and insecticides as needed, but be careful of too many products in a mixture – I have observed foliar damage from some mixes.

Desiccants

Some fields may justify the use of a desiccant to speed drying and harvest, particularly with early maturing, weedy, and/or strobiluron fungicide-treated soybeans. The increasing use of these practices in Alabama has led to many fields with harvest ready pods, but green leaves, stems and sometimes weeds which slow harvest and can affect grain quality. Application of desiccants may speed harvest and lower harvest costs and discounts, but we don't have a lot of recent information about the most effective and economical practices. I had several trials across the state in 2006, with an average yield increase of 2.6 bu/A compared to untreated plots. I suspect that the yield increase came from more timely harvesting, as well as more efficient combine separation. Most estimated product costs ran from around $3 to 10/A plus application.

Consider a desiccant treatment only after the beans are fully mature, spraying too early risks yield loss and green beans, while applying too late may result in shattering before harvest. For indeterminate (Grp 4) varieties, that's basically after 65% of the pods have turned color. For determinate (Grp 5, 6, 7) that's when the beans are fully developed and ½ of the leaves have dropped. Read the desiccant label for all the details. Some products, such as Gramoxone Inteon, have a preharvest interval of up to 15 days, so timeliness can be critical. Cool weather can also have an effect on these harvest aids, just like cotton defoliants, so if needed don't wait until the weather turns too cold.

There are only a few products listed in our IPM Guide for soybean harvest aids – Aim, Gramoxone Inteon and Firestorm (paraquat), various glyphosate formulations, and sodium chlorate. A few similar products and other paraquat formulations have, or may soon also have labels. It is important to use the right adjuvant listed on the label – ie. crop oil with Aim, surfactants with paraquat, etc.

I'll briefly list some of my observations from the trials last year. Aim was generally good on most broadleaves with the exception of sicklepod, and was generally good but also inconsistent on soybean leaves and grasses. The paraquat formulations are quick-acting on leaves, take a little while on stems, and are fair on grasses. Glyphosate will do well on most mature weeds, esp. grasses, but is slow and will do little on Roundup Ready soybean leaves. Sodium chlorate has been around a long time, but is slow to act and weak on grasses, but eventually does well on soybean leaves and stalks.

One consistently good combination that we found was Gramoxone Inteon @ 1 pt/A (0.25 lb/A of paraquat) plus Sodium chlorate @ 1/2 gal/A of a 6 lb/gal formulation. This gave us a quick drydown of the leaves, while the sodium chlorate dried the stems out. Caution – sodium chlorate can be very corrosive to paint and equipment, so wash it off well each day.

These are only a brief overview, so be sure and check individual labels for all the details.

Again, I hope this information has been helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Petcher

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Agronomic Crops