



Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities

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News Letter October 2009

Upcoming Meeting:

Fourth Annual Precision Agriculture and Field Crops Conference

Date: December 8, 2009

Place: Wind Creek Hotel in Atmore, Alabama.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) and cooperating partners will host the Fourth Annual Precision Agriculture and Field Crops Conference December 8, 2009 at the Wind Creek Hotel in Atmore, Alabama. The conference will begin with registration and equipment demonstrations at 8:00 A.M. with educational sessions beginning at 9:00 A.M. The conference will conclude after lunch with additional afternoon workshops on managing and using precision agricultural data. A session is also being developed for livestock producers to address the use of precision agriculture in pasture management.

The conference will feature precision agriculture exhibits, equipment demonstrations and educational sessions. During the event, producers will have the opportunity to learn about a variety of precision agriculture topics including section control technology, economics of precision agriculture, soil fertility applications, and CORS for agriculture.

Participating partners for the event include the Alabama Farmers Federation, Auburn University, University of Florida Extension, Alabama Natural Resource Conservation Service, Alabama Association of Conservation Districts, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Stations and USDA-ARS.

The conference is free and open to everyone. For more information visit the Precision Ag website at: www.alabamaprecisionagonline.com or contact Shannon Norwood at 256-353-8702, ext. 28 or hubersr@aces.edu.

Late Season Rains Affect Crops

The late season rains which were heavy and steady did hurt the crops in this area. The cotton crop took the worst hit. By mid August it looked like growers had an excellent crop. The September rains took their toll on cotton by causing boll rot and hard lock. Each field depending on stage of growth and when the rains hit took a different loss. Some fields were close to 100 % damaged. Across the 8 counties here cotton took a 25 to 30 % loss due to the continued rains. Some of the earliest planted and early maturing soybeans suffered heavily from pod rot. The rains made late corn difficult to harvest and caused some quality loss. Peanut disease increased and the rains made control programs somewhat difficult. However, the rains did help the peanuts to make a good crop.

Peanut Harvest has begun: The peanut crop in Southwest Alabama is rated good to excellent.

When to harvest is one of the most important decisions growers make each year. Peanuts gain 300 to 500 pounds per acre and two to three percent in grade during the week and a half before optimum harvest. Even greater loss may occur if harvest is delayed past optimum maturity. Table 1 illustrates the average loss over four years from digging too early or too late. Dollars lost represent losses in clear profit, as no additional input is required other than digging at the best time.

Table 1. *Harvesting at Optimum Maturity*
Williams, E.J. USDA/ARS Tifton

	Pounds lost/Acre	\$ lost/Acre (\$0.25/lb)
Dug 2 weeks early	744 lb.	\$186
Dug 1 week early	253	\$ 83
Dug at optimum	0	0
Dug 1 week late	500	\$125
Dug 2 weeks late	541	\$135

Most of the peanuts sampled for maturity by the Hull Scrape Method in this area have shown the peanuts to be following close to their calendar days from planting. However, some fields have been drastically different. The lesson to be gained from this is that growers need to be alert. And the time invested to make the best digging decision on each field is important. Severe leafspot and other foliar diseases may require a grower dig his peanuts a bit earlier. However, the peanuts should be as close to their optimum maturity as possible.

Peanuts slow down in their normal maturing process when temperatures dip below 65 degrees F. Caution should be taken as colder temperatures arrive. Never dig peanuts within two days of a heavy cold snap. Leafspot, white mold and pod rot are giving our peanuts heavy pressure at this time. Growers are encouraged to tighten up their leafspot spray program by shortening the interval to 7-10 days on heavy disease problem fields. It will be critically important to stay on a fungicide program up until two weeks of harvest, even in October when we start to get cooler weather. Occasional rainfall events and warm temperatures are still enough for diseases to spread.

ROW CROP ACRES FOR SOUTHWEST ALABAMA 2009

County	Peanuts	Cotton	Corn	Soybeans	Grain Sorghum	Wheat Grain	Oats Grain
Baldwin	15,951	8,425	4,213	21,458	435	8,704	1,319
Escambia	9,709	12,744	4,059	10,524		7,610	294
Monroe	6,078	16,458	1,624	4,891		1,574	203
Mobile	4,443	6,795	985	1,498		815	100
Conecuh	863	3,408	844	1,600		768	106
Butler	617	565	1,743	287			
Washington	2,087	247	564	544		363	12
Clarke	301	552	59				26
Total Acres	40,049	48,894	14,091	40,802	435	19,834	2,060

Total Acres: 144,271 row crops and 21,894 small grains

Changes in Crop Acres from 2008 to 2009

Crop	2008	2009	Difference
Peanuts	49,346	40,049	- 9,297
Cotton	52,346	48,894	- 3,452
Corn	15,464	14,091	- 1,373
Soybeans	33,284	40,802	+ 7,518
Grain Sorghum	789	435	- 354
Wheat	20,987	19,834	- 1,153
Oats	6,886	2,060	- 4,826
Total Acres	179,564	166,165	- 13,399

Cotton is still the number one row crop in Southwest Alabama, with peanuts and soybeans tying for second, followed by corn. The biggest shift in acres was in the decrease in peanuts and the increased acres of Soybeans. Soybeans were the only crop to increase in acres. All other crops had a slight decrease.

Southwest Alabama and Statewide Comparison of Row Crop Acres

Area and Year	Peanuts	Cotton	Corn	Soybeans	Grain Sorghum	Wheat grain	Oats grain
Southwest Alabama 2009	40,049	48,894	14,091	40,802	435	19,834	2,060
Alabama 2009	155,439	255,000	280,000	450,000	12,000	230,000	55,000
Alabama 2008	222,000	310,000	250,000	330,000	12,000	240,000	45,000

Soybeans

There are close to 41,000 acres of what appears to be a good crop of soybeans in Southwest Alabama.

Fall armyworms, loopers and stink bugs are still being found in many soybean fields. Do not let them rob you of your harvest.

Asian Soybean Rust has now been detected in 42 counties in Alabama. So it should be considered that every soybean field in Alabama has been exposed to Asian Rust. Growers should consider their costs and yield potential before spraying. Other soybean diseases found in this area in commercial fields have been Cercospora blight, Frog-eye leaf spot, downy mildew, target spot and stem canker.

For more information and better understanding of the rust situation call the **Soybean Rust Hot Line: 800-446-0388**.

For more information on soybean rust, view the USDA rust information web site at: sbr.ipmpipe.org. When viewing the national map, click on Alabama to read Dr. Ed Sikora's weekly commentary and recommended management practices for the state.

Soybean Harvest: The September News Letter had an excellent article on Soybean Desiccants written by Dr. Dennis Delaney. The added speed of harvest by using desiccants was the key note of this article.

Wheat and Oats

We are still one month away from planting our small grain crop. Again, September News Letter contained information on variety selection for our area. It appears that our oat acres will stay about the same, while wheat acres due to poor market prices will probably drop drastically. Some of the wheat growers who are cutting back on their wheat are planning to reduce acres, while increasing their management on the acres they plant.

Dr. Austin Hagan has an excellent article on Wheat Disease Timely Information at the following web site: <http://www.aces.edu/timelyinfo/PlantPathology/2009/September/pp683.pdf>

Peanut and Vegetable Insect Advisory

1-800-446-0375

Dr. Ayanava Majumdar AZM0024@auburn.edu 251-331-8416 is collecting pheromone trap data and has insect advisory information on this hot line. Information is updated weekly.

Dr. Brenda Ortiz has written September issue of the Small Grains News Letter. It can be found at: <http://www.Alabamacrops.com>

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

Sincerely,



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