

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

MINIMIZING PESTICIDE USE WHILE IMPROVING NET RETURNS

- The impetus for integrated pest management grew out of concerns over insect resistance to insecticides and possible environmental harm related to using a purely insecticidal approach to insect control.
- Integrated pest management is a sustainable approach to managing pests that combines biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools to minimize economic, health, and environmental risks.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- Collaborating with the Texas Pest Management Association, Texas Department of Agriculture, and the USDA, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas A&M AgriLife Research established the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in Texas in 1972.
- IPM methods used to control agricultural pests include growing resistant plant varieties, monitoring fields, implementing pest action thresholds, and using pesticides only when necessary as a last resort. Insecticide selection for maximum insect control with minimum effect on beneficial insects and maximum safety is also emphasized.
- Knowing that newsletters and other legacy forms of communication are becoming less useful to agricultural producers and industry personnel, Extension Entomology has developed unique weekly Agricultural Pest Management News from the Field audio updates (delivered via website, texts, and social media) for four crop production areas in Texas: South Texas, Blacklands/Upper Gulf Coast, West Texas and Southwest Oklahoma, and the High Plains.

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- These four different weekly audio news broadcasts cover emerging issues that are local and relevant in the major crop production areas of Texas. In addition to covering current insect, weed, and disease status, the weekly summaries also include current crop growth and development, irrigation, and other agronomic topics.
- Episodes are edited and quickly posted to an audio file delivery website and clients receive a text message with a link to each weekly episode. Links to the audio files are also disseminated via social media and electronic newsletters/blogs.
- There are currently 688 subscribers statewide to one or more of the regions serviced, with 80% representing agricultural producers, agricultural industry, and crop consultants.
- In 2023, AgriLife Extension entomologists provided 77 audio updates that were listened to more than 4,600 times. These units totaled 12.4 hours of content. The average episode was 9.3 minutes in length and there was a total of 4,611 listens during the growing season (59.3 listens per episode).

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The 2023 Agricultural Pest Management News from the Field survey indicates \$780,000 in economic benefits across 70,479 acres of field and forage crops and pecans, or \$11 per acre. The total economic impact for these IPM crop programs is unknown because we are unable to determine the ultimate listenership and economic returns from the information provided.