

Cotton Scouting School Program

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

MINIMIZING PEST DAMAGE IN COTTON BY SCOUTING

- Cotton is highly vulnerable to a variety of insect, weed, and disease pests and should be scouted for these pests regularly.
- Cotton acreage is generally scouted for pests by crop consultants and seasonal crop scouting employees, farmers themselves, and/or intermittently by fertilizer and agri-chemical dealer representatives; all of which need to be trained in scouting cotton for pests and beneficial insects, and information action thresholds and proper pesticide use.
- Approximately one-half of cotton acreage in Texas is not routinely monitored for pests.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- The Cotton Scouting School Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- In 2024, Extension provided cotton scouting training programs at seven locations that included Burleson, Nueces, Hidalgo, Hill, Hockley, Lubbock and Potter counties.
- Trainings were conducted by Extension Agents – Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Extension Entomologists and Program Specialists, Extension and Research Plant Pathologists, and Extension Agronomists.
- Subject matter of the trainings included insect scouting procedures, pest identifications, action thresholds and pesticides, crop growth and development, cotton disease identification and control, and weed identification and control.

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- Program participants included scouts (17), agricultural producers (38), agribusiness and industry personnel (35), and AgriLife Extension County Agents (13).
- Training sessions lasted 3 hours, and 2 hours of IPM CEUs were delivered.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The economic benefit of the Cotton Scouting School Program was measured in terms of the potential economic benefit resulting from the knowledge gained and the adoption of practices taught in the trainings.
- Survey respondents represented approximately 600,000 acres of cotton and indicated an average anticipated economic benefit of \$21.80 per acre, resulting in a total anticipated economic benefit of \$13 million.

