

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

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CHALLENGES

- Rising input costs and an array of production-related challenges, including droughts, disease, invasive species, water supply and demand balance, pesticide and GMO resistant pest species have placed serious stress on cotton producers.
- Changing global markets and managing agricultural production and price risk have producers seeking ways to maximize production efficiency to maintain competitiveness.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- The Premier Cotton program was developed to identify key program areas that address producers' needs, and impact decision-making and economic returns for cotton production.
- Program areas identified are weed management, variety selection, disease and nematode management, soil and water relationships, soil fertility, insect management, and economic risk management and marketing.
- Weed management programs focus on weed recognition, resistance understanding, control and management strategies, herbicide selection and use, drift issues, new technologies, and the safe use of herbicides.
- Variety selection programs include seed quality and testing, emergence issues, performance in varying environments, seeding rates and depths, growth and development, variety traits' influence on pest control, seed quality, and economics.
- The focus of disease and nematode management programs is recognition and diagnosis, cultural/ management strategies, varietal importance, rotational influence, and pathogen biological and environmental interaction.

- Soil and water relationships and soil fertility programs provide outreach education and updates on improved efficiency and new technologies, water management, economics of irrigation, soil types, deep soil nutrient availability, fertility economics, and other soil nutrient factors.
- Insect management programs concentrate on the identification of both damaging and beneficial pests, economic and action thresholds, use of pesticides, resistance management, technology traits and differences, life cycle of insects, and field scouting.
- Economic risk management and marketing programs provide insight on the importance of marketing, cost of production, budgeting and analysis, identifying risk, FARM Assistance program, and technical tools available.
- In 2024, 931 producers participated in 29 educational programs, field days, and other events.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The economic benefits of the programs were measured in terms of the potential increase in net returns resulting from the adoption and implementation of selected cotton production and management practices taught in the programs.
- Participants of the programs manage an estimated 1.4 million acres of cotton, and participant survey responses indicated an average anticipated economic benefit of \$8.93 per acre resulting from adoption of practices taught at the programs.
- The anticipated annual increase in net returns in 2024 is \$12.3 million for producers who adopt selected management practices.