The Floyd County
AG NEWSLETTER
December 2014

FARM BILL MEETING DEC 19TH TO FEATURE DR. JOE OUTLAW

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices in Floyd and Crosby counties will conduct the 2014 Farm Bill Meeting from 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Dec. 19 at the Floyd County Friends Unity Center, 990 Farm-to-Market Road 786 in Lockney.

This meeting will feature special guest speaker, Dr. Joe Outlaw. Dr. Outlaw is a Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University. He also serves as the Co-Director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) at Texas A&M University. In this role, Dr. Outlaw frequently interacts with members of Congress and key agricultural committee staff to provide feedback on the likely consequences of agricultural policy changes. Dr. Outlaw spent a considerable amount of time in Washington D.C. working on the new Farm Bill and will be a very valuable resource to the producers in Floyd and Crosby Counties and the surrounding communities.

This farm bill sign-up requires producers to make several major decisions that will affect them at least through 2018. This training is meant to help producers through the sign-up process and teach them to use the online decision-aid tool that's available for them. This tool will help them with the decisions they'll need to make related to base reallocation and yield data, and whether to select Price Loss Coverage, or PLC, or Agricultural Risk Coverage, or ARC, for covered commodities.

Drinks and refreshments will be served. An RSVP is helpful but not required to the Floyd County Extension office at (806) 983-4912.

2015 CAPROCK CROP PRODUCTION CONFERENCE TO BE HELD JANUARY 21

The 2015 Caprock Crop Production Conference will be held on January 21, 2015 at the Floyd County Friends Unity Center in Muncy with registration starting at 7 a.m. and the first speaker at 8 a.m. Cost is $35 if you pre-register and $45 at the door. This yearly conference is a joint effort between Floyd and Crosby counties and is a great opportunity for producers to listen and learn from numerous speakers on a variety of topics currently affecting agriculture. Tentative agenda items include Cotton Variety Tests, Tax Strategies/Financial Planning, Grain Sorghum, Laws for Farm Equipment on Public Roadways, STAX and SCO Crop Insurance Options, Drift, Weed Management, and TDA Laws and Regulations. 7 CEU's will be offered, including; 4 General, 1 IPM, 1 Laws and Reg's, and 1 Drift Minimization (Pending TDA Approval). Please call the Floyd County Extension Office to pre-register or with any questions at (806) 983-4912.

STAX OR SCO? ANOTHER DECISION FOR COTTON PRODUCERS

By Forrest Laws
Delta Farm Press
Fri, 2014-11-21 10:11

STAX or SCO? That's one of the decisions cotton producers will have the opportunity to make when they sign up for the Agricultural Act of 2014 over the next few months.

And it will be a decision for cotton growers alone because STAX or the Stacked Income Protection Plan is only available to them while they and producers of

the 21 program crops can sign up for SCO or Supplemental Coverage Option.

The U.S. cotton industry signed on to the insurance-based concept of what became the Agricultural Act of 2014 early on during the 2014 farm bill debate. But producers were concerned about the lack of "shallow-loss" coverage in the existing crop insurance programs at the time.

That is, growers could produce just enough crop to keep them from receiving an indemnity from federal crop insurance revenue or yield coverage and still suffer a loss in the area between the maximum of their crop insurance coverage and the total cost of producing a crop. The Stacked Income Protection Plan is the industry's answer to that dilemma.

On the other hand, National Cotton Council leaders understand there may be situations in which the Supplemental Coverage Option may be the better of the two for cotton producers.

"I'm going to run through some questions here that producers ought to ask themselves if they're trying to decide between STAX and SCO," says Gary Adams, vice president for economic and policy analysis with the National Cotton Council.

"Hopefully, this summarizes the differences and the similarities between the two products. One, for SCO, underlying coverage is required. For SCO, the trigger can be yield or revenue area-wide, depending on your underlying coverage. STAX will be a revenue product. The deductible for SCO is 14 percent.

"And that 86 percent coverage level for SCO is not adjustable. STAX has 10 percent at its minimum deductible, but it's a flexible number. The coverage band goes down to underlying coverage on SCO, and it goes down to 70 percent on STAX."

The premium subsidy is 65 percent on Supplemental Coverage Option and 80 percent on the Stacked Income Protection Plan, said Adams, who spoke at several STAX/Farm Bill update sessions held by the NCC in the Mid-South the week of Nov. 17.

"It's a tough concept to illustrate without working through a couple of examples," says Adams. "SCO is based off a county experience in terms of whether or not and indemnity is triggered. If an indemnity is triggered under SCO, that percentage loss at the county level is applied to the dollar value of your deductible.

"Why that is important is that you may be in a situation where you may have an APH yield that's well above the county yield then the dollar value of your indemnity is going to be larger because it reflects your larger yield. So, in some ways, the difference between your yield and the county yield has the ability to kind of amplify the indemnity up."

That doesn't change the fact that the county experience has to trigger the indemnity, but it almost acts like the protection factor in STAX, according to Adams. (The protection factor in STAX is a means by which growers can increase or decrease the level of coverage so they can better tailor their coverage to their risks.)

Growers should ask two questions before making a decision, he notes. One, is the grower's APH well above the expected county yield? "And if it's 40 percent to 50 percent above the expected county yield, then that's increasing the value of your indemnity."

If your underlying coverage is less than 70 percent – since SCO has the ability to extend down to that lower coverage level – that might be a situation where a producer looks at SCO compared to STAX, says Adams.

"Now realize SCO doesn't carry as large a premium subsidy, and it doesn't trigger at the same level – one (STAX) is 90 vs. 86 percent for SCO. – so again there's a lot of tradeoffs," he said. "I encourage you to work through some of those examples and decide which one might be the best fit for your farming operation."

At each of his presentations, Adams presented a comparison of STAX and SCO for the county or parish where the meeting was held. For Ouachita Parish, where Monroe, La., is located, Adams listed an insurance projected price of 65 cents per pound, an expected county yield per planted acre of 908 pounds and an expected revenue of $590 per acre (Price times yield) for the irrigated practice.

The trigger percentage of expected revenue (90 percent or 86 percent times the expected county revenue of $531 for STAX, $508 for SCO between 86

percent and 70 percent coverage and $508 for SCO between 86 percent and 60 percent coverage.

Those combinations would provide a maximum indemnity of $142 per acre for STAX (1.2 times 20 percent of $590), $94 for SCO 86 percent to 70 percent coverage (16 percent times $590) or $153 for SCO 86 percent to 60 percent coverage (26 percent times $590).

The premium rate would be 0.3999 for STAX 90 percent to 70 percent, 0.3442 for SCO 86 percent to 70 percent or 0.2745 for SCO 86 percent to 60 percent. The total premium for STAX 90 to 70 would be $57 per acre, for SCO 86 to 70 would be $33 per acre and for SCO 86 to 60 would be $42 an acre.

After the subsidies were applied, the producer premium for STAX 90 to 70 would be $11 an acre, for SCO 86 to 70 $11 and acre and SCO 86 to 60 $15 an acre.

For more information on using your computer to analyze your options, visit www.decisionaid.afpc.tamu.ed. The decision aid tool was developed by Texas A&M University through a grant from USDA.

RESISTANT -WEED PROBLEMS COULD BE BAD AGAIN NEXT YEAR

By Ron Smith
Southwest Farm Press
Fri, 2014-11-07 14:56

Roundup-resistant Palmer amaranth has been bad in the Texas High Plains and Rolling Plains this year. And it could be worse in 2015.

Weather will play a role, say weed scientists Peter Dotray and Wayne Keeling, both with Texas AgriLife Extension in Lubbock. Dotray also has teaching and research responsibilities with Texas Tech.

"Rain made it seem like the light switch just turned on," in early summer, Dotray said. "If it's dry next year, resistant-weed infestations may not be as bad, but we know the source of plant resistance is here."

Keeling said the job farmers have done this year also will play a role in what they face in 2015. If they had escapes in the field in October, they can expect to see problems next spring unless they take precautions—before the resistant seeds germinate. "They will need to apply residual herbicides at as high a rate as the label allows." The key, he adds, is to have the herbicide in place before the resistant-weed seeds germinate.

Acceleration of glyphosate-resistant weed pressure has been rapid, Keeling says. "In 2011, we saw resistance start in a little pocket in the High Plains. It seemed to be a niche problem. Over the last three years it became widespread. We thought escapes would be a problem, but this year, it just blew up."

They agree that early rainfall over the Memorial Day weekend provided near perfect conditions for resistant Palmer amaranth weeds to germinate and get a foothold in cotton and other cropland. "Conditions were ideal to germinate pigweed seed," Keeling says. That early and heavy rain also may have limited efficacy of pre-emerge herbicides, and possibly prevented timely follow-up as fields dried out. "The two-week extended rainfall period increased the number of weed escapes. That's not all that unusual here. We often see erratic rainfall patterns and long dry periods."

Management is crucial

Management decisions also likely played a role, Dotray adds. "I've seen fields side-by-side that were managed differently—residual herbicide use in one field but not in the other. Some fields are extremely clean and others are extremely weedy and most were somewhere in between."

He says some farmers may have "let a few weeds go and those fields will likely be worse next year."

Keeling and Dotray say producers who continued to rely on Roundup-only this year may have faced an uphill battle all season as they tried to manage resistant pigweed. "It was an eye-opening experience. A lot of farmers spent a lot of money and some I believe simply walked away," Dotray says. Cultivation and hoe labor added to production costs.

They say farmers will need to rethink how they manage weeds and may need to go back to older chemistries and technology to clean fields up after the weed explosion this year.

"Roundup still does a good job on many weeds, including some Palmer amaranth," Dotray says. "But we need to take the pressure off Roundup with residual herbicides that have a different mode of action."

Roundup-only will not work with resistant pigweed as widespread as it has become in just the last three or four years. A systems approach that includes preplant and pre-emerge herbicides, residual herbicides applied after planting or with Roundup applications and some old technology, including cultivation, hooded sprayers and rope-wick applicators, may be necessary.

Also, within a year or two farmers may have new chemistries and new systems to incorporate into those programs to add other layers to weed management practices.

Farmers may have to spend a little more money to add residual herbicides, Dotray says. "But those herbicides will be critical to help manage resistance."

Keeling says some farmers, pressured by declining cotton prices, may have eased off on pre-emergence and residual herbicides. "Cutting back on herbicide applications early is a false economy."

Zero tolerance

Dotray says "zero tolerance" will need to be part of the weed control goal. "That was a concept I heard about 20 years ago, and now the Mid-South and Southeast areas are practicing this idea. Ninety-eight to 99 percent control of Palmer amaranth isn't good enough. We need to strive for complete control when dealing with pigweed resistance and make sure resistant plants don't produce seed."

If farmers can take out 80 percent to 85 percent of their weeds with yellow herbicides and get another 10 percent to 15 percent with residual at-plant materials that leaves only about 5 percent, and takes a lot of pressure off Roundup and other postemergence herbicides.

"Some may think we have weeds resistant to those yellow herbicides but these herbicides are still an effective foundation for good control," Dotray says.

Incorporation will be a key to pre-emergence herbicide success, however. "They must be properly incorporated to get the best activity," Keeling says. Mechanical incorporation is better than water, he says, but in no-till situations, irrigation can be effective.

Starting clean next spring will be critical for effective resistant-pigweed management, especially following a year with heavy pressure. "Producers have one chance to start clean," he says. "Get the weeds controlled ahead of the crop."

Some farmers may have to re-evaluate tillage practices as they clean up resistant weeds. Transgenic varieties made weed control in reduced-till and no-till production much more manageable, but with reliance on Roundup and a surge of resistant pigweed, many may have to go back to the plow for a year or two to break the resistance cycle. "Producers may not have to deep plow or cultivate every year," Dotray says, "but tillage may be a way to break up resistance even in reduced- and no-tillage systems."

But he cautions producers to go back into no-till production carefully. "Resistant weeds show up even on the best -managed farms. Be vigilant and adopt a zero-tolerance level. Be more aware that resistant weeds are here."

Keeling and Dotray also note that new technology is on the horizon to help manage resistant weeds.

"I think we have reason for some optimism," Dotray says. "New technology will help, but we cannot simply replace Roundup-only with Clarity-only or 2, 4-D-only systems. I don't think we will."
Systems approach

He and Keeling recommend a systems approach that incorporates the new technology, scheduled to be available in 2016, with residual herbicides, possibly some cultivation and wise use of Roundup.

One new product, Zidua from BASF, is already available and several companies are mixing it with

other products for broader spectrum weed control. "It's targeted for pigweed," Keeling says, "and is extremely effective."
He says a limited amount of Monsanto's XtendFlex cotton will be available in 2015 with wider availability expected in 2016. Dow's Enlist system for cotton is also expected in 2016.

"We have to get to 2016," Keeling says. "That's why residual herbicides are so important."

Dotray says producers should assume that resistant Palmer amaranth is in every county and possibly in every field, and individual farmers need to develop Best Management Practices on every farm. "Liberty needs help. Dicamba will need help; 2, 4-D will need help. We need to consider all products and all technologies. We can no longer consider glyphosate as our silver bullet, and no new silver bullet is coming."

As those new products make their way into the mainstream, he's also learning more about weed biology and ecology. "How long does the seed persist in the soil? How quickly can plants produce seed at the end of the growing season? How many seed will a weed produce? We need to learn more about our weeds."

He says producers have already learned a lot about product stewardship and those lessons have to carry over to new products and new technology.

Dotray and Keeling agree that farmers, especially cotton farmers, need to start thinking now about how to approach weed control next year and consider spending a few extra dollars on yellow herbicides to start clean and take some of the pressure off Roundup. Both say resistant as well as non-resistant weed populations have been difficult to manage this year.

"It's been interesting," Dotray says.

(Picture of Palmer Amaranth courtesy of agfax.com

RAINFALL TOTALS

	2014	2013	2012
Jan	.00	.62	.00
Feb	.16	1.19	.45
March	.13	.23	1.51
April	.36	.07	.31
May	5.80	.21	.63
June	3.22	2.11	2.26
July	3.09	2.15	.12
Aug	2.92	.64	1.02
Sept	4.30	2.52	2.17
Oct	.40	.96	.44
Nov	1.64	.52	.00
Dec		.66	.59
Total	22.02	11.88	9.50

NEW COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT FOR AG & NATURAL RESOURCES: CRISTEN BROOKS

I want to take the time to introduce myself to ya'll in case I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you in person yet. My name is Cristen Brooks and I am the new County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Floyd County. I am married to Jeremiah Brooks and have 2 kids that go to school at Floydada ISD, Jack is 10 years old and Preslie is 7 years old. Both my kids are active in 4H and this is Jack's first year to show horses and beef cattle and he plans on doing rifle as well. My family and I have lived in Floydada for the past 7 ½ years and my husband grew up in Silverton. We also own a small commercial cattle operation in partnership with my husband's brother and wife. I grew up in 4H showing horses and even competed at the collegiate level as well. I am looking forward to supporting and growing the 4H program here in Floyd County.

Now to tell you a little bit about my background. I originally grew up in Fort Collins, Colorado but moved to Lubbock in 2002 in order to attend Texas Tech University. I graduated from Tech with a degree in Agricultural Communications. After graduation I went straight to work for Cargill Meat Solutions where I spent 6 months in the meat packing plant in Plainview. After training at the plant I moved on to various sales and purchasing roles in both Wichita, Kansas and St. Louis, Missouri. In these positions I worked closely with cattle procurement, futures and markets, profits and margins and a number of sales and public relations functions. My husband and I then decided to move our family back to Texas where I worked as a sales representative for a broadline food service distributor in Lubbock. Most of my food service accounts were schools and I worked closely with the school lunch program as well as helping the schools to manage the government commodity program. In 2012 I decided to pursue a career more focused in agriculture since that's where my passion lies and went back to work for Cargill with their grain division, Ag Horizons, located in Hart. In this role I was in charge of all the grain purchasing into our Plainview, Hart and Flagg elevators as well as working closely with farmers on various risk management strategies to optimize profits for their operation. I currently hold my Series 3 National Commodity Futures license and was a registered Commodity Trading Advisor with Cargill, allowing me to broker options and utilize a number of risk management tools with local producers.

I started in Floyd County as the Extension Agent on September 19th. I am very excited to begin this new chapter in my life in a career that is more service oriented and also allows me the opportunity to work with kids as well as agriculture and livestock producers. I enjoy working in agriculture and hope to provide stability to the extension program here in Floyd County as well as provide producers with the education and resources they need.

Please don't hesitate to call or stop by the Extension Office at any time and I look forward to meeting new faces every day.

Cristen Brooks

MAILING LIST UPDATE

Please help us save postage. If you could/would like to receive this in an email, or would like to be taken off the mailing list give us a call at 806-983-4912 or send us an email at floyd@ag.tamu.edu.

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in Floyd County.
Editor: Cristen Brooks
Production: Donna Keaton

Floyd County Extension Agent-Ag
110 S. Wall, Floydada, Texas 79235
Phone (806) 983-4912

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

110 S. Wall
Floydada, TX 79235