TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

# The Floyd County AG NEWSLETTER

## *February, 2013*

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## WEED MANAGEMENT - WEST TEXAS

This is also an excellent time to start planning on how to best utilize a soil residual herbicide in your 2013 weed management program. Many fields received timely herbicide applications last season. Even in fields where poor weed control has been observed, it is important to continue to try to control weeds for harvest efficiency and reduce weed seed production that will affect the future cotton crops. Growers should not ignore weeds that have escaped previous control measure and the financial investment made today will pay off in the 2013 crop and beyond.

In 2012, numerous fields in a least five counties have been reported withstanding multiple glyphosate applications, suggesting that some level of resistance is likely present. One common theme in several of these fields was lack of any residual herbicide in a glyphosate-based weed management program. Growers with weeds, whether they are herbicide resistant or not, should remove escaped plants because each female plant has the capability of producing over a half-million seed. A successful long-term strategy for effective control of Palmer amaranth should center on a "zero tolerance" approach. In this approach, the goal late-season is to remove escaped weeds from the field to reduce additional seed development for 2013. Additionally, large weeds growing through the cotton canopy have already reduced yield potential and will cause problems at harvest if not removed. Producers are encouraged to look at their fields and surrounding areas and destroy all plants that are suspicious for herbicide resistance by any effective means available, which could include hand hoeing, cultivation, spot-spraying, or using hooded sprayer applications with effective burndown herbicides. This will limit the production of additional resistant seed and help prevent the problem from becoming more widespread next year. In small cotton, there may still be the possibility of cultivation or broadcast or hooded applications, but in larger cotton with lapped middles, spot spraying or hand removal might be the best option. Be aware that weed seeds can travel with equipment from one area of the field to another and from field to field. If you have fields where you suspect resistant weeds may be present, do not transport equipment from a weedy field to a clean field without carefully cleaning the equipment. If you have a custom harvester moving into one of your fields, make sure it has been cleaned first. When considering fields at the same crop maturity, the harvesting order should be from cleaner fields to weedier fields.

Effective weed management starts with a dinitroaniline herbicide. The use of soil residual herbicides at-planting will help to control difficult-to-control weeds that escape PPI herbicides and are a challenge for postemergence herbicides. There are several herbicides that may be applied with glyphosate in tank-mix at the first over-the top timing and several other soil residual herbicides are available for use at layby. Consider overlapping residual herbicides for effective resistance management in 2013.

FOCUS on South Plains Agriculture
By Peter Dotray And Wayne Keeling

## DROUGHT - TOLERANT CORN

There's nothing like a couple years of drought to help determine the advances being made in drought-tolerant corn. Dr. Qingwu Xue, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientist, says there are some significant differences starting to show up.

Xue, AgriLife Research crop stress physiologist in Amarillo, said drought and water issues have been very relevant in the last two years, especially the historic drought for Texas in 2011 and for the Corn Belt in 2012. Xue and his team have been evaluating these drought-tolerant corn hybrids at the North Plains Research Field near Etter for the past two years.

The hybrids were grown at three populations and at three irrigation levels, from full irrigation to limited irrigation.

The irrigation levels were 100 percent evapotranspiration, 75 percent and 50 percent, he said. Evapotranspiration is the amount of water lost from plant transpiration and soil evaporation. The purpose of irrigation is to apply water to meet a plant's evapotranspiration demand. With less than 6 inches of effective rainfall during the 2012 corn season, the irrigation for 100 percent, 75 percent and 50 percent evapotranspiration was 24 inches, 18 inches and 13 inches, respectively, Xue said. Under these conditions, the corn yields were 180-220 bushels per acre for 100 percent level, 160-180 bushels per acre for the 75 percent level and 100-120 bushels per acre for the 50 percent level.

"At the full irrigation level, drought-tolerant hybrids hardly showed any yield gain as compared to the check hybrids," Xue said. "However, the drought-tolerant hybrids showed yield increases of up to 20 bushels per acre at 75 percent and 50 percent evapotranspiration levels over the check, depending on hybrid and population. It will be up to the producer to determine if he can ever afford a 100-bushel-per-acre corn yield level or not. But certainly, if we are talking about limited irrigation in the future, drought-tolerant corn may fit into producers' choices."

Xue said in terms of irrigation water savings, 75 percent evapotranspiration may be the most attractive because the yield only dropped about 15 percent, but irrigation water was reduced by 25 percent or 6 inches of water savings.

AgriLife Today, Writer: Kay Ledbetter

# TEXAS GRAIN FARMERS ELECT NOT TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE GRAIN INDEMNITY FUND

**AUSTIN, Texas (January 2013) –** Texas grain farmers voted against the establishment of a statewide grain indemnity fund in the referendum held by the Texas Grain Producers Indemnity Board, according to the results released today after the canvassing of the ballots.

Farmers across the state voted in the referendum, which was held Nov. 19, 2012, until Dec. 7, 2012, on the statewide establishment of a grain indemnity fund. According to the Texas Department of Agriculture, who canvassed the ballots, there were 1,678 ballots submitted during the referendum with 1,171 farmers voting in opposition and 507 farmers voting in favor – preventing it from obtaining the required two-thirds majority to pass.

"Over the years, many producers across Texas have been forced to deal with the financial pain that comes when a grain buyer fails. Unfortunately, Texas grain producers will continue to face this risk for at least another crop year," TGPIB Chairman Dee Vaughan said. "The TGPIB will be meeting soon with stakeholder groups to determine the best course of action for the future."

During the referendum, which was held in accordance with the referendum rules found at 4 Texas Agriculture Code, Ch. 17, Sub-chapter A, Div. 3 by the TDA, farmers voted on establishing an assessment rate within a range of 0.2 percent to 0.6 percent of the final sales price of grain. The assessment would have been collected and remitted to the TGPIB effective Feb. 1, 2013 – providing coverage for producers for the 2013 crop season.

The TGPIB was established as the result of legislation passed by the 2011 Texas legislature and signed into law by the governor. Rep. Larry Phillips of Sherman and Sen. Craig Estes of Wichita Falls introduced the legislation after a series of grain buyer financial failures in recent years resulted in millions of dollars in losses to Texas grain producers.
The establishment of the grain indemnity fund would have allowed the TGPIB to award up to 90 percent of the financial losses suffered by producers of corn, sorghum, soybean and wheat when grain buyers fail to pay for grain due to a financial failure.

The TGPIB will meet on Jan. 4, 2013, in Austin, Texas, to discuss what next steps it will take as a board.

To learn more about TGPIB and the proposed indemnity fund program, visit www.TexasGrainIndemnity.org.

*The Texas Grain Producer Indemnity Board is a nine-member board appointed by the agriculture commissioner to oversee the establishment and operations of a state grain indemnity fund. For more information, visit www.TexasGrainIndemnity.org*

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. We will seek to accommodate all persons with disabilities for all meetings. We request that you contact the Floyd County Extension Office as soon as possible to advise us of any auxiliary and/or services needed

# ALTERNATIVE CROP OPTIONS FOR 2013

I don't mean to sound pessimistic, but from my view point the drought isn't over. I realize this is cotton country and I would love to see a good crop. My worry is in the cost, can producers afford the cost of cotton? The cost of cotton is high and lately the returns are low. I realize the returns are low across all crops, but the input cost are not as high with some other crops. I just want to remind producers of that as they prepare for the coming year. Below I have listed three crops that have been grown in the area, there are other options for those who are interested.

**MILO**

There isn't much need to go into detail about milo, most producers have and continue to grow it. Milo is a great option for dryland fields and corners. Last fall most producers decided to plant more milo and less cotton. The recent snow and rains received in February are giving producers reason to second guess that decision. However, I believe that producers should not forget the ideas they had about planting milo just yet, because it is still be a good option.

**SUNFLOWERS**

Sunflowers are deeply rooted. It is common for sunflowers to extract soil moisture from a depth of six feet or more. Sunflower soil fertility programs for much of West Texas are minimal or nonexistent. Sunflowers are often seen as a low input crop fertility-wise, and this sets up your subsequent crop for a potential disappointment. For sunflower, if a certain nutrient is not readily available it will take all it can from the top two feet or so and go deep to get the rest. Other crops can't do this. If you choose to not fertilize sunflowers you should soil test after sunflower in advance of growing cotton, corn, or other crops the next year.

Sunflower can do about as much with the first 5 inches or so of timely irrigation water as any crop grown in West Texas. Preplant irrigation for sunflower can have longer benefit than for other crops. Sunflowers favor larger irrigations (2-4" per application) over frequent irrigation as deep percolation of water is still taken up by the deep-rooted sunflower. Research data suggests that in many years optimal timely irrigation can perform just as well as full irrigation for sunflower.

**GUAR**

Guar can be used as an alternative in dry-land production or grown in rotation with other crops, like cotton, to replenish soil-nitrogen levels and increase future crop yields. Increases in cotton production have measured greater than 12% following a guar rotation. Also guar is an option for summer cover crops, because it is a legume and will return nutrients back to the soil.

The growing season is typically 120 days, but can be 90 to 120 days with timely rains or irrigation. Guar prefers a hot, dry climate and thrives in areas receiving less than 30 inches annual rainfall. A pre-plant herbicide can be used; Treflan® applied at 1 to 1 1/4 pint per acre is preferred. Prowl® may also be used, but due to guar's oil-based composition is not recommended. Yields have been measured and ranged from 350 to 1725 lbs. per acre on dry land. Irrigated land yielded from 500 to 2250 lbs. per acre.

# PRIVATE APPLICATORS TRAINING

Floyd County Extension Office will hold a pesticide applicators training course in March for any one interested. The test will be administered at the extension office by Texas Department of Agriculture after the training is completed. Anyone interested should contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office to preregister. The course will only take place if an adequate number of attendees preregister. Date of training to be determined based on the needs of participants.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. We will seek to accommodate all persons with disabilities for all meetings. We request that you contact the Floyd County Extension Office as soon as possible to advise us of any auxiliary and/or services needed.

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