



# The University of Georgia

## CRISP CO. AG NEWSLETTER – June 2011

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### Around the County

This newsletter is very wordy however a lot of info has come my way that will be useful to you and you should be aware of. I've looked at a lot of watermelon fields (and a few cantaloupes) over the past month or so. Powdery Mildew was found in a field North of Crisp Co and a lot of growers have applied Quintec in response. Remember powdery mildew CAN infects stressed vines when melons get near harvestable size during hot dry weather. It's critical to keep moisture around plant roots to avoid unnecessary plant stress. Also continue to monitor fields for symptoms (collapsed vines, vine snake heading). This is also spider mite weather and they often start in dryland corners of fields. Gummy Stem Blight doesn't seem to be a problem right now as hot dry weather doesn't favor this disease. Fusarium Wilt hit hard in some fields and continues to be a problem. Field research plots have been established in Crisp Co evaluating various treatments in planting water to aid in controlling this disease. Results from this work look promising and hopefully we can get this information out to growers soon.

### 2011 Drought and Cotton Planting/Replanting Decisions <sup>1</sup>

*(Don Shurley, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, The University of Georgia)*

The 2011 planting season is off to a very dry start. Some parts of south and east Georgia have had little or no measurable precipitation the entire month of May. Planting progress is not too far behind normal but moisture at planting has been marginal and cotton that has been planted is stressed and/or emerging poorly with spotting stands. The short-term outlook for rainfall is not promising and conditions could worsen.

As of May 22, 56% of the expected Georgia cotton acreage had been planted. This compares to 59% on average at that date and compares to 62% planted the same date last season. So, the crop is not too far behind in terms of planting on schedule but some of the crop that has been planted is not emerging well. Further, with cotton prices over \$1 per pound, producers could feel pressed to plant the crop even in marginal moisture situations, to meet the May 31 crop insurance deadline, and hope for rain.

In fields with poor emergence, the question is whether or not to replant and, if so, when.

If a field has not yet been planted at all, the question is whether or not to go ahead and plant and hope for rain, or continue to wait and plant if and when moisture has improves.

### Crop Insurance

For south Georgia, the crop insurance planting deadline is May 31. This is the deadline to plant and still receive the full Yield Guarantee or Revenue Guarantee. Suppose 300 acres are planted and the farm APH yield is 790 lbs per acre and the producer elects coverage of 70%. The Guarantee would be:

Yield Guarantee = 300 acres x 790 lbs x 70% = 165,900 lbs

Revenue Guarantee = 165,900 lbs x \$1.15/lb = \$190,785\*

\*Minimum based on the Projected Price

For cotton planted after May 31, the Guarantee is reduced 1% per day for up to 15 days. This is called the Late Planting Period. For cotton planted after June 15<sup>th</sup>, the Guarantee will be 50% of the full Guarantee. Suppose 50 acres of the 300 on the farm are planted 10 days late, the Yield Guarantee would be:

$$(250/300 \times 165,900) + (50/300 \times 165,900 \times 90\%) = 163,135 \text{ lbs}$$

The Revenue Guarantee would be  $163,135 \times \$1.15 = \$187,605$ .

### **Replanting**

In the case of replanting, there is no reduction in the Guarantee provided the crop was initially planted on or before May 31. Even if replanted after May 31, the Guarantee is not affected. The Guarantee is reduced only if initially planted after May 31.

June cotton is not uncommon in Georgia but producers are not required to plant or replant after May 31--producers may and do plant during the Late Planting Period but are not required to do so.

For replanting, if the producer is not able to replant due to continued lack of moisture and it is determined impractical to plant and approved by the insurance adjuster, the acreage is eligible for the full Guarantee. Suppose, the farm APH is 790 lbs per acre and coverage is 70%. The Yield Guarantee would be 553 lbs per acre ( $790 \times 70\%$ ). If the crop is appraised as a 30% stand, the Production to Count would be 237 lbs ( $790 \times 30\%$ ) and the Loss would be 316 lbs ( $553 - 237$ ).

If the producer then decides to plant a second crop (other than cotton), the initial payment is 35% of this full amount. If the second crop is not insured or has no Loss, the remaining 65% of the Loss on the first crop (cotton) will be received. Essentially, there is no penalty or discount on the cotton payment provided there is no loss on the second crop.

### Prevented Planting

Although planting is currently close to a normal pace, continued lack of rainfall could have producers questioning the practicality of planting (not replanting, but initially planting for the first time). Producers may plant in dry conditions and hope for rainfall and good emergence or, if it is determined by the crop insurance adjuster that planting is not practical, the producer may be eligible for "prevented planting" coverage.

Under prevented planting coverage, the producer is paid 50% of the Guarantee. If it is determined the producer is eligible for prevented planting coverage, the producer may elect to plant a second crop such as grain sorghum, etc. but must do so after the Late Planting Period ends on June 15 and receive 35% of the Prevented Planting Payment (or 17.5% of the Guarantee).

### **Replant Decision Alternatives**

Some producers are reporting poor emergence due to lack of rainfall and are considering replanting. With the lingering drought and the May 31 planting deadline approaching, producers must determine the best course of action to take.

### Replant Now or ASAP (by May 31)

Regardless of when you replant, the crop insurance Guarantee is not affected if the acres being replanted were initially planted on or before May 31. The net income from this decision is the expected crop income minus the costs of replanting and all other costs from planting through harvest. Even if replanting, the second

planting or entire crop could still incur loss if conditions do not improve. So, an insurance indemnity is also received if below the Guarantee.

#### Wait on Moisture Before Replanting (possibly after May 31)

If the areas to be replanted were initially planted on or before May 31, there is no reduction in Guarantee and no penalty in waiting. From an agronomic standpoint, however, the later you plant there may need to be some changes made in variety and other management practices. Yield may also be impacted although it is not uncommon to plant June cotton in Georgia with good results provided the remainder of the growing season is favorable. As above, the net income from this decision is the expected crop income minus the costs of replanting and all other costs through harvest. Even if replanting, the second crop or entire crop may still incur loss if conditions do not improve. So, an insurance indemnity is also received if below the Guarantee.

#### Do Not Replant

Depending on the severity of the problem with emergence, the additional yield and production to be gained by replanting may or may not justify the costs. If you do not replant, you receive payment for Loss based on the appraised stand.

#### Do Not Replant, Plant a Second Crop

If a second crop is planted (after the Late Planting Period) and either uninsured or has no Loss, the payment received is not reduced—would be the same as if no second crop were planted. So, the decision to plant a second crop is a matter of comparing expected income to costs and the risk of planting a crop this late in the season.

### **Prevented Planting**

Despite the dry conditions, cotton planting in Georgia is still near normal pace. With cotton prices above \$1, producers have incentive to plant even in risky situations. In some situations, however, producers may not consider it practical to plant. The producer may be eligible for Prevented Planting coverage but this must be determined by the crop insurance adjuster. If determined eligible for Prevented Planting, the producer has several options.

#### No Second Crop

Only if determined eligible for prevented planting coverage, the producer will receive 50% of the Guarantee on the acreage not planted. The income from this decision would be the payment.

#### Plant a Second Crop

Only if determined eligible for prevented planting coverage, the producer may plant a second crop (other than cotton) and will receive 17.5% of the first crop Guarantee on the acreage planted to the second crop. The net income from this decision would be the payment plus expected income from the second crop minus costs of the second crop. Net income from a second crop must be higher than the amount of payment reduced.

### **Cotton Costs**

The following are estimates of production costs for cotton production. These are the variable costs or direct/operating costs only. Fixed or overhead costs are incurred even if production does not take place and are thus irrelevant to the planting decision. These costs are revised and adapted from 2011 UGA Extension crop budgets for non-irrigated, conventional tillage cotton.

Variable costs incurred to date are estimated at \$92 per acre. These costs are “sunk” and thus irrelevant to the decision at this point. Remaining cost to be incurred if planting/replanting is done and production taken through harvest are estimated to be \$329 per acre.

At \$1.15 per pound for cotton (the Projected Price on crop insurance and also near the current market opportunity), the yield needed to cover the remaining variable cost is 286 pounds per acre. This includes seed and associated technology fees and seed treatments. In poor emergence and replant situations, these costs may not apply and producers need to discuss this with their seed company sales representative. If these costs are not re-incurred, it impacts the replant decision greatly.

<b>Estimated Variable Costs, 2011 Georgia Non-Irrigated Conventional Tillage</b>
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	<b>Total</b>	<b>Pre-Plant</b>	<b>At Planting or Later</b>
BWEP	\$1		\$1
Crop Insurance	\$22		\$22
Fertilizers and Lime	\$103	\$66	\$37
Seed (incl. tech fee and treatments)*	\$93		\$93
Weed Control	\$44	\$8	\$36
Insect and Nematode Control	\$20		\$20
PGR, Boll Opener, Defoliant	\$15		\$15
Fuel, Lube, and Repairs	\$65	\$11	\$54
Labor	\$26	\$4	\$22
Interest	\$13	\$3	\$10
Net Ginning, Warehouse, and Storage	\$19		\$19
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>\$421</b>	<b>\$92</b>	<b>\$329</b>

*\*Producers considering replanting need to discuss this with their seed company sales rep. The seed cost and technology fee may be forgiven on the replant acreage. Seed treatments also need to be discussed and considered.*

### Summary

If a producer is considering replanting or thinks it is not practical to plant or replant, he/she should contact their crop insurance provider. The insurance adjuster will determine the acreage affected and appraised yield in replant situations or the eligibility for prevented planting.

In situations where there is a poor stand, there is little advantage for a producer to replant now into dry conditions. As long as the field was initially planted on or before May 31, the crop insurance Guarantee is not affected by replanting after May 31 if waiting for moisture.

If deciding not to replant, the crop insurance payment will be determined from the appraised stand. The payment will be the difference between the Guarantee and the adjusters' appraisal. If deciding to replant, expected net income from the replanted cotton must be greater than the payment given up.

For cotton not yet planted, if dry conditions persist as we move into June, the producer may be eligible for prevented planting coverage but this must be determined by the adjuster. Prevented planting acreage may be planted to a second crop at a reduced payment rate.

<p><i>1/ Reviewed by USDA Risk Management Agency, Valdosta, GA. Any errors or misleading statements are the responsibility of the author. This report is intended as a general discussion and guide for decision making. Producers should consult with their crop insurance provider and adjuster for more specific details, information, and interpretation.</i></p>
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## Current Corn Disease Issues – Bob Kemeriat, UGA Plant Pathologist

Please remember that you can follow the updates for our corn sentinel plots at [www.sbrusa.net](http://www.sbrusa.net) and look under "corn" rather than "soybeans" in the upper right-hand drop box.

For the record: NO SOUTHERN CORN RUST has been detected in Georgia at this time; we are finding common rust in the southwestern counties, but this disease is of little concern.

NORTHERN Corn leaf blight has been reportedly found in Seminole County and in Tatnall County.

Disease Assessment: The current hot and very dry conditions are generally unfavorable for the development of diseases of corn. Southern Rust does develop under warm conditions; however we have not seen any of it yet. Also, the extreme dryness will reduce the risk to this disease.

Disease management at this time: Much of our corn crop has reached or will reach first tassel over the next couple of weeks. "First Tassel" is recognized by many corn growers as the "time" to apply fungicides. Our stance at the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is that "first tassel" is the appropriate time to ASSESS the NEED for fungicides. It would be a mistake for corn growers in our state to believe that all of our corn fields should be automatically sprayed at first tassel- there are many this year that do not need to be sprayed. However, first tassel can be an appropriate time to protect the corn crop from serious disease losses.

Here are my recommendations:

It is appropriate to spray now if the field has good yield potential AND:

1. There is some reason to believe that the field is at increased risk to disease (e.g. corn behind corn and a disease like northern corn leaf blight is progressing within the crop or if southern corn rust is detected in sentinel plots in the area.)
2. The grower will be making a trip across the field for some other reason and decides to invest in a protectant fungicide application.
3. The grower simply wants the security of a preventative fungicide treatment, whether it is needed or not, and perhaps hopes for some benefit from the "plant health" concept associated with the strobilurin class of fungicides.

Reasons to delay or even eliminate fungicide applications include:

1. Poor yield potential to begin with.
2. Good rotation coupled with current environmental conditions greatly reduce the risk of losses to fungal diseases.
3. Currently no southern rust has been detected with Sentinel Plot monitoring program.

If a grower decides to use a fungicide, which should he or she use? (Loaded question)

1. Tebuconazole and propiconazole are less expensive and are effective fungicides but will not have the same protective window the Headline, Quilt Xcel, and Stratego YLD will have.

2. Fungicides like Headline, Headline AMP, Quilt Xcel, and Stratego YLD are more costly than tebuconazole or propiconazole; however they are likely to have a broader spectrum of activity against corn diseases, a longer protective window and perhaps some "plant health" benefit, though this can be difficult to document.

We will continue to keep you updated as the season progresses. Current conditions do not justify a widespread recommendation for use of fungicides on corn; however for the reasons mentioned above I recognize that there are valid reasons for treating specific fields.

## **Current Cotton Issues – Guy Collins, UGA Cotton Agronomist**

I've been getting several recent reports of poor stands and seedlings having difficulty emerging. There may be several things going on here, but we collectively want to highlight some of the most common situations.

1. Since it has been so dry, many dryland fields were planted rather deep (1.25-1.5 inches) in hopes of utilizing some of the moisture that was (and I emphasize "was") present at these depths. Anytime cotton is planted this deep, you could expect some difficulty for emerging seedlings. Exceptions may include rather soft soils that do not form a surface crust, with moisture relief in the near forecast. In many of the recent reports, some seedlings germinated/emerged while others did not, primarily resulting from inconsistencies in available moisture at these depths, and also a result of this moisture being depleted more rapidly than anticipated. Some of the seed that did not germinate soon after planting, may in fact still germinate once rains return, and only time will tell. Some seed may have germinated and died before (or soon after) emergence, due to rapid drying. If this is the case, the grower may consider replanting, although this is something that should generally be avoided. The need for replanting must be determined on a case-by-case basis, and potential benefits must be weighed against additional costs for each individual situation. Previous data from Georgia suggests that replanting may be justified if approximately half of the planted area is occupied by 3-foot skips. When determining how many 3-foot skips are present, remember to give appropriate credit to large skips (for example, a 12-foot skip should be considered as four 3-foot skips)

2. Some folks have reported seedlings expressing difficulty emerging through the soil surface with some "broken neck" seedlings observed, where the cotyledons appear stuck in the soil and the hypocotyls break under this pressure. For most situations, I've been telling folks to keep the water running in fields where irrigation is an option. We don't want to flood any cotton, nor irrigate unnecessarily, however it is very important that the soil remain moist until seedlings have fully emerged. These situations must also be monitored very frequently. Also some folks have irrigated already, the recent warm (until Tuesday) and windy weather has dried the soil surface out very rapidly. Light and frequent irrigation could also improve stands. Yes, there is a risk of herbicide injury in these cases, but establishing a decent stand should be priority at this point. Herbicide injury can be managed in most cases, if a good stand is present. Delays in maturity can be expected, possibly increasing the importance of very frequent monitoring for thrips. If particular fields are crusting over, light rotary hoeing may help seedlings emerge, but this needs to be done in a very timely manner, as it could damage fully emerged seedlings. Switching to a hill-dropped planting system from this point forward could also improve stands in soils that tend to crust.

3. Similar to last year, some folks are experiencing extensive herbicide injury with evidence of severe thrips damage. Herbicide injury typically slows seedling growth for a while, allowing thrips to feed longer on developing leaves. We have been experiencing higher than normal thrips infestations, especially in early planted cotton, which tends to exacerbate the problem. In these cases, growers should monitor for thrips presence very frequently, and should also treat these fields very promptly, if a foliar spray is justified. Keep in mind that seed treatments may not provide optimal suppression in situations where seedlings are not growing rapidly, and one or more foliar sprays may be required.....this can only be determined through

frequent monitoring, and unnecessary sprays should be avoided. Additionally, these situations may scare some folks away from the use of some pre-emergent herbicides. This should not be the case!!!! By now, most folks should realize the absolute necessity of every pre-emergent herbicide option we have available for combating pigweed, and this should not change. Prior to Roundup Ready cotton, a little herbicide injury was not uncommon at all. This is nothing new.

4. I've been getting a lot of questions regarding the decision to "dust-in" cotton and wait on rainfall prior to the insurance cut-off date. There are two ways to approach this. One approach is a risk management and business decision based on prior experience and the rapidly approaching insurance cutoff date. This approach may result in variable business decisions from grower to grower. The other approach is from an agronomic standpoint. Some folks may dust in cotton, and get a rain two to three weeks later and achieve optimal stands. Others may have poor stands. This is largely dependent on how much (if any) moisture is available at planting, how deep this moisture is, temperatures after planting, and how much rain occurs when it finally does rain. Due to this variability, it is very difficult to recommend that a grower dust-in cotton unless a rain event is almost guaranteed within a few days (usually a tropical depression or a wide-spread front / storm system that covers most of the state). Some folks have dusted in cotton in fields that had some very marginal moisture in the zone where seed was placed. In many cases this has led to erratic stands and other complications. Keep in mind that replanting should be generally avoided, so it is important to get it right the first time, speaking from an agronomic standpoint. Additionally, if a grower decides to dust in cotton, the seed should be placed in a zone without moisture and relatively shallow to allow rainfall to reach the seed and begin germination. We have 11 more days before the insurance cutoff date. As of today, there is little chance of rain until next weekend (May 28th), although this forecast can change rapidly. The number of acres that a grower has left to plant varies from grower to grower, but watching this forecast closely over the next week may provide some additional insight on the likelihood of rainfall before the insurance cutoff date. Hopefully, we will get some rain in time for growers to plant the remainder of their crop by May 31st. Of course, there is always the risk that conditions will remain dry to the end of our planting window, however we can achieve acceptable yields if germination occurs by June 15th if we have good weather throughout most of our growing season, so we still have some time. However, preventing delays in maturity may become more important if cotton is planted towards the end of our planting window. At these later planting dates, rapid germination and stand establishment becomes more critical, as we have lost most of our flexibility by that point in time.

5. As we are in the second half of our planting window, some folks have asked when they should start planting earlier maturing cultivars. There are several things to consider here as well. Historically, approximately 20 percent of our cotton is planted in the first two weeks of June, even when DP 555 BR was widely planted. Not all June planted cotton was planted to DP 555 BR, but some likely was. Late June planting was not necessarily uncommon in far South Georgia, however this may have been risky in some circumstances. We now have a rather wide range of maturity amongst our currently available varieties, but it is important to remember that essentially all of our newer varieties are earlier maturing than DP 555 BR to some degree. Additionally, there is no magical date when we need to convert over to earlier maturing varieties for several reasons. Keep in mind that even an early maturing variety may have late maturing tendencies if it is over-fertilized and over-watered, with little or no PGR management. Thrips and herbicide injury may also delay maturity. Other varieties may behave like an early and a late maturing variety depending on the environment in which it is grown. For early June planted cotton, naturally we will have to focus more on developing a crop in a shorter season environment, but this encompasses more than just variety maturity alone. Therefore these decisions should be made more in regards to management and environment as opposed to simply making these decisions based on variety maturity. At later planting dates (first 2 weeks of June), possible delays in maturity should be prevented or managed, and growth should be monitored very frequently to prevent excessive growth, regardless of the variety planted. For later planted cotton, more attention and/or management may need to be given to mid/full-season or growthy varieties, but variety decisions should still be made based on yield potential in particular environments (dryland versus

irrigated). For example, it may be unwise to plant a very early maturing variety in a dryland situation (if its performance is likely to be reduced) just because it is planted late.....on the other hand, a grower may not want to plant a late maturing growthy variety in a heavily irrigated situation of if he is not likely to manage it for a shorter season environment.

Rapid emergence is also imperative for later planted cotton. As the planting window comes to an end, replanting may no longer be an option, therefore irrigation may be necessary for rapid emergence and stand establishment. Slightly increasing seedling rate may be necessary in some cases in order to offset the risk of standloss. Remember that we tend to lose a lot of flexibility during the latter part of our planting window. Additionally, waiting on rain during this time will further delay emergence and maturity of this late planted cotton. Keep in mind that soil temperatures during this time are usually quite a bit hotter, and soil moisture may deplete much quicker.

## **New Grain Crops Blog** (“Blog” = short comment usually via email)

UGA Grain Specialist Duey Lee has created a “Grain Crops Blog”. He and other specialists are already “blogging” information that is very useful to grain producers and will keep you in the loop about current growing conditions. If you wish to be a blog receiver, you can do so by going to the following web site and signing up. There are no charges that I’m aware of. The address is <http://www.georgiagrains.com>.

## **Cotton Scout Schools: Tifton June 13, and Midville June 21, 2011**

Cotton insect scouting schools are annually held at various locations in Georgia. These programs offer general information on cotton insects and scouting procedures and will serve as a review for experienced scouts and producers and as an introduction to cotton insect monitoring for new scouts. The annual Cotton Scout School in Tifton will be held on June 13, 2011 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center. The Midville Cotton Scout School will be held on June 21, 2011 at the Southeast Georgia Research and Education Center. The training programs at each location will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.

## **Irrigation Theft Prevention Meeting**

The Crisp County Young Farmers in cooperation with the Crisp County Extension Service, Dooly County Young Farmers, and the Dooly County Extension Service will host an Irrigation Theft Prevention Meeting on June 2, 2011 at the Crisp County Extension Office. The meeting will begin at 7:00p.m. Speakers include Investigators from the Crisp and Dooly County Sheriff’s Departments and irrigation industry representatives. Information will be provided that can assist irrigation owners in decreasing copper wire theft and damage to irrigation systems.

Please call the Crisp County Extension Office at 276-2612 by 5:00pm on June 1, 2011 to be included in the meal count.



*These come into our office every year. These are phylloxera galls. Phylloxera are tiny aphid like insects that create these galls on pecan leaves.*

# THANK YOU

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We can never say thank-you enough to our sponsors especially in tough economic times. Thank-you for making UGA Extension Agriculture Programs possible in Crisp County.

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Sincerely,

*Tucker Price*

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