THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

AG BRIEFS

Monthly Newsletter from the Pierce County Extension Office

September, 2007

The 2007 crop season is slowly winding down as corn and tobacco harvest get to the short rows. Peanut, soybean and pecan harvest are next on the list. In looking back, if it hadn't been for Tropical Storm Barry we would have probably really had a short season particularly on our non-irrigated land. Forecasters are calling for a La Nina for the SE United States which according to predictions means that this fall, winter and early spring will be warm and dry. I have been told the historical data is there and the conditions of the Pacific also fall in line so as my winter meetings approach, my focus will be on the "what if" situations. As always, my staff and I appreciate what each of you are doing for agriculture.

Peanuts

Most all of our peanuts should be surpassed the 110 day mark by now. Those who were able to plant around May 14 are close to 127 days. (Based on today being the 18th of September) Peanuts greater than 115 days old need to be checked for maturity progress using the hull scrape method. I typically like to look at samples at least twice to see how the field is progressing. Based on hull scrape samples thus far, I would say we are looking at around 130-135 days. Some fields may mature quicker (120-125) and some may be a little later (135-140). This is why they need to be checked.

Maturity Age: 135-140	Maturity Age: 149-161
GA Green	GA-02C
AP-3	GA-01R
GA-03L	C-99R
Carver	
AT 3081R & AT3085RO	

* GA-02 C should be left in the field for the maximum number of days if possible. Grade and yield will be very poor if dug too early.

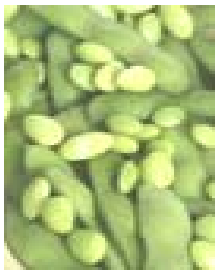
This has been one of the worst years for white mold pretty much every where across the state. Here, some fields have a good dose of it while others are just taking random hits. I have looked at numerous fields this summer that have been under several different fungicide programs. I can't say that I have seen one product or program that was better than another in terms of white mold suppression but rather believe conditions, vine growth and field history are the big contributors. You don't have to have all three of these factors.

In the event of an impeding tropical storm or hurricane it is important to really take note of vine conditions. If vines are healthy and can withstand several days past optimal harvest then leave them in the dirt. On the other hand, if vine conditions are extremely poor and can't withstand the extra days, its best to invert ahead of the system. If there is a risk of a frost, which some of this year's crop may encounter, leave them in the dirt. The vines will help insulate the crop.

Cool weather can slow the maturation of the peanut crop and lengthen harvest but it takes two to three consecutive days of temperatures in the lower 40's and 30's to stop progression. We'll probably see some of this also.

HULL SCRAPE CLINICS ARE BEING HELD EVERY MORNING AT THE PIERCE COUNTY AG BUILDING SO I CAN MAKE FIELD VISITS IN THE AFTERNOONS. I WILL BE AT SOUTHERN STATES IN WAYCROSS EVERY THURSDAY MORNING AND WILL BE AT GRIFFIN'S IN BLACKSHEAR ON THURSDAY AFTERNOONS.

Soybeans



Soybean rust appears to be all around us according to some reports. Only one sample and it hasn't been confirmed yet came from a commercial field. What this means is that growers have done a good job of protecting their crop. Once we get to R6 stage and pods are filled we should be ok.

As anticipated, the three weeks of hot, dry weather did cause a kick of small developing fruit and blooms. However, several fields have responded by putting on more flowers in the top of the plant. Some of these will make a pod and some may not. This is why I have encouraged folks to keep worms in check and disease to keep these leaves intact to supply developing pods. Overall, I still think this crop has good potential as rains and weather have cooperated for the most part.

On later planted soybeans that have been treated with Dimilin and possibly a pyrethroid, velvetbean caterpillar numbers may be low to non-existent; however, loopers may be present and neither of the above mentioned products works on them. Tracer is the commonly used product for loopers but scout fields before making the decision to spray. Same thing holds true for sting bugs. Populations have been erratic.

Plant dates were really pushed in some place on this year's crop and I have been surprised to see how some of the varieties have responded. As we get on the tail-end or past our typical planting dates, the vegetative growth is typically reduced and yields may be lower. I have seen some of this and I have a lot of vegetative growth and low fruit set. But I have also seen late planted soybeans with good vegetative growth and good fruit set.

Cotton

As with other crops, our cotton crop looks pretty good considering the dry start. Two of the big questions have been related to stinkbugs and stopping the top growth of some fields. For the stinkbug situation, I have seen a few in some fields and none in others. My thoughts are simply spray according to scouting. Will a mepiquat application slow or stop the growth in the top of some of this cotton? This is a tough one and you can find a different answer from every different person you ask. There is a theory out there that late season mepiquat applications will reduce vegetative growth at the time of cut-out thus channeling more energy into the development of late-season bolls. Current UGA research has not shown any yield advantage with these treatments.

Stinkbug populations have been up and down over the past few weeks but as of this week (Sept. 17) have shown signs of building in some fields. Later planted cotton, in particular, should be looked at closely and quarter sized bolls should be examined. The economic threshold is when 20% of the quarter sized bolls show signs of damage and stinkbugs are present. Spray stink bugs on an as needed basis. Cotton defoliation is just around the corner and next month's issue will include defoliation recommendations other than a frost.

Cattle & Forages

Weather predictions are for a La Nina fall, winter, and spring which according to climatologist mean that the Southeast will be warm and dry. Most remember the prediction from last year (El Nino) and we experienced the opposite. In any case, I think that we should try to plan our forage programs maybe not for the worst conditions but for less than optimal conditions to be on the safe side.

County wide hay supplies may be limited and we may not have as much wheat straw to bale this year. Non-productive animals should be culled to make sure productive animals have adequate forage and hay supplies for the fall and winter months.

Rye and oat supplies are limited and I'm unsure of ryegrass supplies. Based on weather predictions and supplies, either rye or oats or a mixture can be planted and we might have to depend heavily on ryegrass forage to get us to early spring. Again, I am mindful of the weather predictions and non-forgetful of this past winter and spring.

Notes: 1 bushel of rye = 56 lbs of seed
Rye & Oats recommendations: 90 -120 lbs/ Acre
Ryegrass: 10-15 lbs in mixtures and 20-30 lbs alone
Rye + Ryegrass: 75 lbs of rye + 15 lbs of ryegrass

Corn

Irrigated corn harvest has been moving right along and should wind down as peanut digging gets rolling. Yields have been fair to good considering conditions. Fertilizer may have run out a little early on some irrigated fields this year for one reason or another. The Bt corn situation is interesting. Will it work in a double crop situation? The verdict is still pending. Yield expectations shouldn't be as high as traditional corn plantings. I hope to get as much local information on these varieties as possible and also look at it state wide.

Points to Ponder

Once again, I have to mention the importance of crop rotation. It's a good thing for all crops but especially peanuts. I'm not in favor of peanuts behind peanuts and I'm not advocating the practice BUT, in reality, contract price will dictate production as it has always done. So to tie second sentence to the third sentence, specifically, rotate away from fields that have suffered high disease pressures this year. The best way to think about this situation is to look back at records and yields from the first year you produced peanuts. Having "new ground" or "rested ground" for peanut production was a major contributor to production successes.

Upcoming Meetings

Fall Pecan Meeting

October 9, 2007 9:00 a.m. – until
Pierce County Ag Building, Blackshear, Georgia

Sponsored Lunch – Contact the Pierce County Extension Office by noon on October 8, 2007

Forestry Meeting

October 9, 2007 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
The Dixon Memorial Herty Building, Waycross, Georgia
South on U. S. 1

Sponsored Dinner – Contact the Pierce County Extension Office for more information