

# News Splash



Libbie Johnson  
Extension Agent I  
Agronomy/Aquaculture  
[ljohnson@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:ljohnson@ifas.ufl.edu)  
[http://escambia.ifas.ufl.edu/ag\\_index.htm](http://escambia.ifas.ufl.edu/ag_index.htm)

University of Florida/IFAS  
Escambia County Extension  
3740 Stefani Road  
Cantonment, FL 32533-7792  
(850) 475-5230 voice  
690-5230 suncom  
(850) 475-5233 fax



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Dear Escambia County Producers,

My last letter said, HOT and DRY. Well, it's even hotter, but by this time, we've all received the blessing of rain. What looked to be a desperate situation in the fields is looking more promising for our cotton and peanut farmers. I hope the favorable moisture continues!

I know I'm starting to sound like a broken record, but if you want to want to receive our newsletter and other information in an electronic format, we have a new system in place called SMS. Go to <http://subscribe.ifas.ufl.edu> and enroll yourself. You can choose from newsletters from throughout Northwest Florida, pick certain topics, or opt to receive notices about upcoming events. In addition to email notifications, you can sign-up to receive information via text message. If you sign up to receive this publication, *Newsplash*, by the SMS system, drop me an email so I can remove you from the traditional mailing list.

We have several programs coming up that might be interesting to you: the Extension Field Day in Jay (August 25<sup>th</sup>), the Peanut Field Day in Marianna (August 18<sup>th</sup>), a Wheat Producers Meeting in Walnut Hill (September 15), and a Forestry Field Day at Krul Lake (September 20<sup>th</sup>). If you need ROW or Forestry CEUs, be sure to put the Forestry Field Day on your calendar. Those points are hard to come by.

My deepest gratitude to some folks who helped us with some of our kids' programs this summer. Mr. James Earl Hall hosted a field trip to his farm so Pensacola kids could learn about livestock production and vegetable production. He then brought all the kids over to his watermelon patch and let each child pick a watermelon. The smiles on their faces were beautiful when they carried out their melon of choice. Mr. Matt Carter also allowed us to bring a group of kids from Century out to his farm to see vegetable production in action. Also, special thanks to the County Road Prison for allowing us to borrow a grill for our WATER camp held at Lake Stone and to Brian Watson (Co.Road Department) for grilling. Also, thanks to Northview FFA Leadership Team and to Mark Simmons for volunteering at the WATER camp. Lewie Joe Smith- Santa Rosa Farmer- donated towels for us to give to the kids at the WATER camp—the kids were VERY thankful and excited about their new towel.

For you techies out there, Dr. A at the Fairhope Research Station has started a weekly update called the Alabama IPM Communicator. Visit <https://sites.aces.edu/group/commhort/vegetable/Vegetable/IPMCommunicator.aspx> to find the source for the weekly reports (May to October) with information arranged into different sections ranging from IPM in home garden to IPM in field crops. To subscribe to the newsletter, please email [bugdoctor2@auburn.edu](mailto:bugdoctor2@auburn.edu). I may have used some of the articles for this newsletter ☺.

## Upcoming Events

### **Tuesday & Wednesday August 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> —Marine & Boating Access Workshop, Santa Rosa County Extension, 9:00am**

County staff in Northwest Florida, planners and citizens with an interest in boating and planning for boating traffic will benefit by attending a two-day workshop in Milton Aug. 16 and 17. The Northwest Florida Regional Boating and Waterways Workshop will largely focus on planning tools for boating access; current Florida rules and regulations that apply for boating, anchoring and mooring field issues; the Clean Marina program; and dealing with derelict vessels. Workshop sponsors are Sea Grant Florida, University of Florida – IFAS Extension, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Santa Rosa County. The workshop will be held at the UF/IFAS Santa Rosa County Extension Office, 6263 Dogwood Drive in Milton starting at 9 am. To register, or for more information, visit <http://NWFLboatingandwaterwaywksp.eventbrite.com>.

### **Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup> —Peanut Field Day, Marianna NFREC, 8:00am**

The annual Peanut Field Day will be held at the Marianna North Florida Research and Education Center on Thursday, August 18, 2011 starting with registration at 8:00 AM (CDT) and ending with a sponsored lunch. Field tours will begin at 8:30 AM. Topics to be addressed include disease and nematode control, new varieties, crop rotation, and weed control. CEUs will be available at registration. The Marianna NFREC is located seven miles north of Marianna on Highway 71 or one mile south of Greenwood. For more information, contact Libbie Johnson at 850.475.5230.

### **Friday August 19<sup>th</sup> — Gulf Coast Grass Fed Society Field Day, Bay Minette, AL, 8:30am**

On Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, the Gulf Coast Grass Fed Society Field Day will be held at Hastings Farm, **41744 Pine Grove Rd Bay Minette, FL 36507, from 8:30am - 5:00pm**. Topics that will be covered are New Early Annual RyeGrass and Alfalfa, No-till 3-1 Plantivator for Pastures, Southern Silage-Balage with a Tube Wrapper, Foliar Applications, Soils and Fertility, Panorama Beef, Colorado Marketing and Why Go Organic? Lunch will be provided. Please preregister by calling the Baldwin County Extension Office at 251.937-7176 by **August 15, 2011**.

### **Tuesday August 23<sup>rd</sup> — Grower Food Safety Workshop, Escambia County Extension, 8:30am**

Escambia County Extension will be offering a Food Safety Workshop on Tuesday, August 23, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., at the Escambia County Extension Windstorm Building, 3740 Stefani Road. The workshop is limited to 10 farms and will help the grower develop his or her own personalized food safety manual. The classes will be on a computer, using a web-based food safety manual development program. Farmers needing assistance on the computer can bring a computer-savvy helper. The registration fee is \$20 for the person representing a farm and \$10 for each additional attendee. Lunch is included. Most intermediate and large chain store buyers require some level of food safety program from each farm before they buy. Even smaller operations selling directly to consumers may be advised to develop a manual for their farm. For more information or to register, please call 475-5230 or contact Allison Meharg at [allisonm@ufl.edu](mailto:allisonm@ufl.edu) or Libbie Johnson [libbiej@ufl.edu](mailto:libbiej@ufl.edu).

### **Thursday August 25<sup>th</sup> — Extension Farm Field Day, WFREC – Jay, FL, 8:00am**

On Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, at the West Florida Research and Education Center- Jay (4253 Experiment Road), we will hold the annual Extension Farm Field Day. The topics that will be covered are peanut and cotton variety, peanut disease & management, peanut maturity, cotton density, specialty crop production, cotton fertility, castor production, weed management, and cotton longleaf disease. Registration starts at 8 am. Research tour start at 8:30 am. Lunch will be provided at 12 pm. You can also register online at [MiltonGaters.com](http://MiltonGaters.com) or call the WFREC at 850-983-5216 ext 113 or 850-393-7334. It is free to attend. CEUs will be available.

**Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> — Wheat Meeting, Walnut Hill Ruritan Community Center, 6:30pm**

On Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, we will have a wheat production meeting at the Walnut Hill Community Center, (the Ruritan), 7850 Hwy 97. Topics will be varieties, fertilization, management strategies, and marketing. The meal, starting at 6:30, will be followed by the program. **PLEASE** call Colethia at 850.475.5230 **by noon on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>** to let her know you will be coming so we will know how much food to have ready. If you don't call, you will be given three stale peanut butter crackers and a ladle-full of water.

**Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> — Forestry Field Day, Krul Lake, Blackwater Forest, 9:00am**

On Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, we will hold a Forestry Field Day at Krul Lake in the Blackwater Forest. Identification and use of desirable native plants, overview of right of way/forestry herbicide equipment, herbicides labeled for forestry/right of way use, invasive identification, biology, and control, and wetland plant ID and regulations affecting their control. The program will start at 9:00 am and will conclude with a sponsored lunch. For more information, contact Libbie at 475.5230 ([libbiej@ufl.edu](mailto:libbiej@ufl.edu)), John Atkins at 675.3107 ([srcextag@ufl.edu](mailto:srcextag@ufl.edu)), or Dan Mullins at 623.3868 ([kalmia@ufl.edu](mailto:kalmia@ufl.edu)). CEUs will be offered for forestry, ROW, and natural areas.

**September 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, & 29<sup>th</sup> — Hunter Safety Classes, Langley Bell 4-H Center**

Escambia County Extension will be hosting a Hunter Safety Class at the Langley Bell 4-H Center on September 20, 22, 27, and 29. The *traditional* hunter safety course covers the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to be a safe hunter. This is a 12-hour classroom setting, test and 3-hour range. The *Internet-based* Hunter Safety Course allows the student to learn a majority of the knowledge portion of the course via distance learning. The remainder of the course is covered in a 4-hour classroom setting, test and a 3-hour range. Visit <http://myfwc.com/hunting/safety-education/courses/> to register for either of the classes.

**Monday November 7<sup>th</sup> — Sugarcane Field Day, North FL REC – Quincy, FL**

The 2011 Sugarcane Field Day will be held at the North Florida REC in Quincy, Florida on November 7<sup>th</sup>. They usually give away sugarcane stalks from different varieties for home establishment. For more information about the event, contact Lester Muralles at the Gadsden County Extension Office: 850-875-7255.

**Weed and Feed Grains Check-off**

There will be a referendum to renew the 1 cent per bushel wheat and feed grains checkoff on Thursday, September 8, 2011. The checkoff applies to corn, wheat, grain sorghum, and oats sold in Alabama. The Escambia County voting sites are the ALFA offices in Brewton and Atmore.

**Perennial Peanut Growers Have New Labeled Herbicide**

MANA has added "perennial peanut" to the Impose label. Impose has activity on many broadleaf weeds (e.g. pigweed, Florida pusley, morningglory, sicklepod, etc) but will also control some grasses if application is made in a timely manner. To read the label for Impose, visit this website:

<http://www.cdms.net/LDat/ld86B005.pdf>

### **CALCIUM ON PEANUTS**

Nutrient needs of peanuts are less than many crops that are commonly grown in Florida. Calcium (Ca) needs are especially high for peanuts and the fruit develops from nutrients absorbed directly from the soil rather than from nutrients transported from roots to shoots and back to the fruit, which is the case for most crops. Calcium deficiency results in high incidences of pod rot and unfilled pods called “pops”. This deficiency results in low yields, low grades, and poor germination. Relatively high concentrations of Ca are needed in soil solution with critical Ca absorption period beginning about 20 days after the entrance of the peg into the soil and may extend for up to 2 months. Since peanuts are often grown on sandy soils, which are drought prone, there is a limited

ability of these soils to replenish the soil solution Ca. Heavier soils and irrigated soils are better able to supply the needed Ca for proper uptake. The Ca needs are primarily for pod and seed development not for growing a healthy plant. Test soils and apply the needed amounts of Ca for good yields and quality. Ca can be supplied from various sources including dolomite (22% Ca and 11% Mg), hi-cal lime (32% Ca and 3% Mg) and gypsum (23% Ca and 17% S). Gypsum is a fairly soluble source of Ca and does not increase pH while providing Ca for peanuts. If the pH of a field is low prior to planting peanuts, use hi-cal lime as it changes pH quicker than dolomite even though final yield is usually not impacted.

Source: Dr. David Wright, UF Agronomist

### **DISEASE ALERT: AERIAL WEB BLIGHT OF SOYBEANS**

I observed what appeared to be “aerial web blight” developing in multiple soybean fields in the Black Belt region in west-central Alabama and in Baldwin County this week. Minor symptoms were noted on just a few plants in most fields where it was visible. The hot temperatures, high relative humidity and scattered showers have increased chances that this disease can become a problem in 2011. The disease was a significant problem for some growers in 2010.

Aerial web blight, also known as aerial blight or web blight is caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia*. The disease starts as leaf spots which vary in shape and have reddish-brown margins around the lesion. When the disease is active, infected leaves are wilted and stick together. The fungus can be visible as a spider web-like growth on infected tissue. As the disease progresses, the dead tissue falls out, leaving a tattered-looking leaf. The disease is first seen on leaves in the lower

and middle canopy of the plant but may eventually move into the upper canopy. Petioles, stems, and young pods may also be infected.

Unlike other fungi-infecting leaves that can spread from field to field with spores, the aerial blight fungus will not move from fields where it is initially present. The absence of disease in a field in a growing area where web blight is present indicates that the fungus is not present in the soil (at least in significant amounts), or that the variety has resistance.

Fungicides such as Headline or Quadris would help reduce spread of the disease. These fungicides would perform best if applied before symptoms are visible. An application should occur between the R3 and R5 growth stages. Topsin M is another fungicide that is labeled for aerial blight, but the label states that it only suppresses the disease.

Source: Dr. Ed Sikora, Auburn Extension Pathologist

### **PEANUT INSECT PEST REPORT**

Very little insect activity in peanuts was visible at the Fairhope research plots this week. No stink bugs or caterpillars were collected in sweep net sampling and crops looked good. Some thrips injury to leaf terminals is visible but this is not a threat to peanuts at this point. Peanut plots in Headland were in drought when I last checked and it is the drought that is the biggest worry for producers. Stressed plants encourage insects like armyworms to populate the plants. Scouting weekly is important for all areas.

The lesser cornstalk borer (LCB) moth numbers have been increasing rapidly in pheromone traps especially in the southeast parts of the state. If you have peanuts on high dry ground with sandy soil, then watch for LCB larvae and look for sand tubes on lower stems and pegs. Scouting for LCB is a priority in drought years, so check plants randomly and thoroughly across your field.

Source: Dr. “A” Ayanava Majumdar, Auburn Extension

## COTTON INSECT PEST REPORT

Insect conditions have not changed greatly in the past week or so. Aphids have continued to build in more fields. All other insects are low to moderate levels (mostly sub-threshold). These include plant bugs (including a few clouded plant bugs coming into the mix), bollworms, tobacco budworms and stink bugs. Most growers do not have enough of a single species to apply controls for. The two biggest surprises at this point in the season are the low number of bollworms and the low number of stink bugs in most fields. Numerous fields of conventional cotton still have less than 2

bollworms per 100 plants. Boll damage to stink bugs is less than 10% in most fields. Most of the state has had abundant thunderstorms for several consecutive weeks. Cotton yield prospects have improved greatly and, if conditions continue, numerous fields have two bale plus potential. The two biggest limitations we now have are fields with “skippy” stands and too much late maturing cotton.

Source: Dr. Ron Smith, Auburn Extension  
Dr. Smith's Blog site: <http://alabama-insects.blogspot.com/2010/06/first-blog.html>

## PALMER AMARANTH WIPER

Palmer amaranth continues to be problematic in peanuts across the southeast. This season has been particularly difficult considering that many non-irrigated fields didn't receive enough early-season rainfall to activate the pre-emergence herbicides. Now that the few post-emergence herbicides have been used, there are limited options for the remaining weeds. Fortunately, Gramoxone Inteon has been registered for use in wiper applicators. These wiper-applicators can be very effective, but success is not guaranteed. For these applications, you simply must get enough herbicide on the plant to provide a lethal dose. Though this is common-sense and seems easy to achieve, it can be more difficult than it sounds. Below are a few tips to help maximize success.

- The herbicide should be mixed as a 50% solution. Ground speeds should be kept to a minimum. Experience has shown that speeds greater than 5 mph can result in reduced control.
- For optimum performance, 50% of the plant should be wiped. However, these high rates of Gramoxone Inteon (50% solution) has been shown to translocate through the plant. If a full 50% of the Palmer amaranth can't be wiped, the application can still be effective.
- Roller and sponge applicators have proven to be the most consistently effective. These applicators work best because they are simply capable of wiping more herbicide on each plant.
- If using a roller-applicator, carefully watch roller speed. Faster roller speeds allow you to drive faster and cover more acreage. But, faster roller speeds can sling herbicide solution and cause excessive peanut injury.
- Dense patches of weeds will require slower ground speeds if adequate amounts of herbicide are to be applied to all the weeds. To determine the best speeds, some growers have begun adding foamer (such as used for foam markers) to the spray tank. The foam allows the driver to easily see how much herbicide is being applied to the weeds (due to the presence of the foam) and speed can be compensated quickly.

Though using a roller takes time and technique, it can be a highly effective way to remove late-season weeds.

Source: Jay Ferrell, UF Weed Specialist

**PASTURE OWNERS: SCOUT FOR CATERPILLARS (Loopers and Armyworms)**

With the onset of rains and end of summer approaching be scouting for caterpillar presence, armyworms (*Spodoptera sp.*) and loopers (*Moscis sp.*). The best time to check (and to spray) for these insects is either early in the morning or close to sunset, at which time they are most active. By walking your pastures frequently you will be able to detect their presence when they are small and easy to control. When the grass has moisture build up, —if these pests are present they will fall on your rubber boots allowing detection when they are in an early stage. A product like Dimilin

2L (which is an insect growth regulator that disrupts the normal molting process of the insect larvae) with residual effect is recommended only when the worms are small (½-inch or smaller) and before populations build. Although this product is effective, due to the mode of action, Dimilin 2-L is slow to control, and signs of control with this product may not be seen until 5 to 7 days after treatment. If needing to control worms in less than a week other products should be used (see Table below). If infestations are already in place try grazing the affected area before treating.

Additional options:

<b><i>Product*, **</i></b>	<b><i>Rate (Product per acre)</i></b>	<b><i>Restrictions (waiting time prior to utilization)</i></b>	<b><i>Maximum number of applications</i></b>
<b>Malathion 57% EC</b>	1.5 to 2 pints per acre	None	No restrictions
<b>Sevin XLR</b>	1 to 1.5 quarts per acre	14 days for hay or grazing	Two (2) or less per year
<b>Lannate LV</b>	¾ to 3 pints per acre	7 days for grazing 3 days for haying	No more than 4 applications per year
<b>Dimilin 2L</b>	2 fl oz per acre/cutting	No restrictions for grazing 1 day for hay	No more than 6 fl oz per year. Cannot apply more than 2 fl oz per acre/cutting
<b>Tracer</b>	1-2 fl oz per acre	3 days for hay or until it has dried if grazing	
<b>Baythroid XL</b>	2.6-2.8 fl oz per acre	None	No more than 4 applications per year
<b>B.t.</b>	See label	None	None
<b>Coragen</b>	3.5-5.0 fl oz per acre	None	No more than 4 applications per year
<b>Karate</b>	2.6-3.4 fl oz per acre	0 days for grazing 7 days for haying	No more than 3 applications per year
<b>Mustang</b>	3.0-4.0 fl oz per acre	3 days (hay or grazing) 7 days for harvesting seed	No more than 5 applications per year

\* This information is for preliminary planning purposes only. Be sure to always read and follow pesticide labels and guidelines for any product you plan to use.

\*\* adapted from Sprenkel and Buss, 2011.

Source: Dr. Joanna Newman, UF Forage Specialist

## **CAN 3-CORNERED ALFALFA HOPPERS REDUCE SOYBEAN YIELDS IN THE POD-FILL STAGE?**

Research conducted in Mississippi in recent years indicated that three-cornered-alfalfa hoppers (3CAH) could cause yield reductions in soybeans during the pod-fill stage. Last year an on farm study was conducted to determine if a complex of 3CAH and grasshoppers (GH) infesting full-season soybeans in early August in Tuscaloosa county would reduce yields. Pest numbers were significantly reduced in pyrethroid-treated plots and left unsprayed in other plots (8 reps of each treatment). Each plot was 100 feet long and 2 rows wide with one border row between test plots. The first of 3 pyrethroid sprays was made 8/4 when beans were in the R5 stage and had 5% defoliation. Two more pyrethroid applications were made 8/25 and 9/9 to the "reduced population plots". Sampling of sprayed and unsprayed plots was done by taking ten sweep net sweeps (15 inch diameter net) in the even numbered sprayed and unsprayed plots on 5 different dates. A sweep across two rows was considered one sweep. Plots were harvested 10/19 using a small plot combine and yields determined at 13% moisture.

During the 5 sampling dates numbers of 3CAH averaged 5 per 10 sweeps in the sprayed plots and 33 per ten sweeps in unsprayed plots. GH's averaged 5.5 per 10 sweeps in the sprayed plots and 9.1 per 10 sweeps in the un-sprayed plots. There was no pod feeding detected that could have been done by GH's. At test conclusion

defoliation levels were 5 to 10% in sprayed plots and 10 to 15% in unsprayed plots. Stink bug numbers were very low in all the plots. There was a significant difference in yield ( $P > F = 0.019$ ) among treatments. Average bu/ac yields were as follows: sprayed plots 38.6, unsprayed plots 34.2 and buffer rows 34.7.

This study indicated that 3CAH could reduce yields in soybeans during the pod-fill stage. The question that is difficult to answer is when should one spray their pod-fill-stage soybeans if the only insect pest present is 3CAH. An insecticide application for 3CAH could lead to an induced infestation of pod worms, soybean loopers or other lepidopteran pests. We started picking up corn earworm moths in sweep net samples in cotton this week in north Alabama (Madison county), but the moths were not showing up in pheromone traps next to the cotton plots. Low numbers of tobacco budworm (TBW) moths were captured just prior to July 15, but none have been caught since. Mississippi entomologists have found TBW larvae in their soybean fields which cannot be controlled with an inexpensive pyrethroid. Ideally, it would be easier for a grower to justify an insecticide application to soybeans when additional pests such as stink bugs or "worms" were also present along with the 3CAH. Source: Tim Reed, Auburn Extension Entomologist & Dennis Delaney, Auburn Extension Agronomist

## **BACTERIAL LEAF SCORCH DISEASE IN RABBITEYE BLUEBERRY ORCHARDS IN ALABAMA**

Bacterial leaf scorch (BLS) of blueberry, caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* (Xf) is an emerging disease in southern highbush blueberry production and is accountable for significant yield losses. A state-wide survey was undertaken during 2010-2011 in commercial blueberry orchards in Alabama, aiming to determine the incidence of BLS disease in rabbiteye blueberry cultivars and the distribution of the disease in major blueberry producing regions. A total number of 654 tissue samples were collected during each season from eight commercial orchards located in South, Central, and North regions in the state. Tissue samples from rabbiteye blueberry cultivars 'Alapaha', 'Austin', 'Brightwell', 'Climax', 'Powderblue', 'Premier', and 'Tifblue' were collected and analyzed at the plant pathology lab to detect the bacterial infections. BLS disease was

found in blueberry tissue representing all of the commercial orchards tested. The percentage of diseased rabbiteye blueberry bushes was 16.2% in 2010 with the highest disease incidence of 29% found in blueberry orchard located in Houston County. In the spring of 2011, the BLS disease was found in 14.1 % of the samples tested. The greatest disease incidence of 24% was found in a blueberry operation located in Autauga and Elmore Counties, while the lowest percentage (3.7%) infected blueberry bushes was recorded for Madison County. The BLS sampling will continue through the summer and fall of 2011 and an update on the survey will be provided upon project completion.

Source: Dr. Elina Coneva, Extension Fruit Crop Specialist and Dr. John F. Murphy, E. Vinson and K. Jernigan, Auburn University

## WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO CUT HAY?

Most folks in the Southeast learned how to make hay by watching and helping their fathers and grandfathers. Historically, most hay producers would start cutting hay about 10 a.m. By then, the dew was off, and it was just right to start cutting hay.

If one had grown up in the semi-arid or arid western US, they likely would relate a similar experience in learning how to make hay. However, their tale would differ in that they would likely have had to stay up late at night to cut hay. That's because in that region of the country, it is best to cut hay between dusk and about midnight in order to maximize sugar content. So, why is there a difference between there and here in the Southeast? Which is the right time to cut hay?

### **Daily Variation in Sugar Content**

To answer that question, we need to begin with a primer on a couple of subjects. First, the amount of sugar and starch in any forage crop will go through a daily cycle. Regardless of where the crop is grown, the plant creates carbohydrates during the daylight hours via the process of photosynthesis. The photosynthesis that occurs during the day is at a rate that is higher than the plant needs for growth and maintenance during the day. So, sugar content will generally be highest at dusk. Though starches and simple sugars accumulate during the day, a substantial amount of these carbohydrates are used up during the night for growth and maintenance (via the processes of respiration). Therefore, cutting the crop at night will likely maximize the sugar in the crop, at least at the time of cutting.

However, the difference in sugar content between late evening and early morning is relatively minor. As a percent of the dry matter in the crop, the difference is likely to be less than 1%. This difference is even more marginal in our warm season crops (e.g., bermudagrass, bahiagrass, sorghum-sudan, etc.). This is because of the higher concentration of fiber that exists in these forages relative to cool season crops (e.g., ryegrass, small grains, tall fescue, alfalfa, etc.).

### **Respiration Continues**

Furthermore, respiration by the plant does not stop whenever the crop is cut. In fact, the moisture in the crop has to drop below 47% moisture for respiration to totally cease. In the arid west, the crop moisture in the field can go

from ~85% moisture to less than 47% moisture in a matter of just a few hours. In the humid east and especially here in the Southeast, it may take 2-3 times longer (or more) to drop to that same level. Given that the additional sugar content at early evening vs. early morning is relatively low and the period where respiration will continue to occur is long enough that it uses up most (if not all) of this marginal increase, there is no need to cut hay late in the day or evening in order to maximize sugar content in the Southeast.

### **Weather Risk Trumps Timing**

One must also remember that the greatest risk to hay curing and forage quality is rain damage. Weather prediction is, obviously, far from perfect in the Southeast. If the weatherman says there is no chance of rain in the 48-hour forecast, we have some reasonable amount of confidence that he'll be right more often than not. But, on that third day, and especially on those days beyond, we might as well flip a coin to judge what the weather will be.

Consider this scenario. One wakes up one morning and listens to the 5-day forecast. It predicts clear weather for the next 5 days. The producer decides to cut hay. If the producer cuts on the morning of day 1, he can be reasonably confident that (assuming the crop will dry in 2-3 days time) he will be able to get it up without rain damage. If he decides to wait to cut until late evening on day 1 and assumes it is still going to require 2-3 days in the sun to dry, he may not be able to bale the hay until day 4. The chances are reasonably high that the weather forecast will change for days 3 and 4. So, the risk of rain damage is increased if one waits until the evening because the risk of rainfall on that extra day at the end is much greater than having that same drying day at the beginning.

Consequently, the answer to the question of "When is the Right Time to Cut Hay?" is that it is usually best to start cutting hay as soon as possible during the day. As with any such generalization, there are always some exceptions (e.g., when cutting it for silage, green-chop, etc.). But, one should base their decision on this timing more on the potential impact of the weather rather than the minor diurnal variations in sugar content in our forages.

Source: Dr. Dennis Hancock, GA State Forage Extension Specialist

From Libbie: For a good article on cotton plant regulators, visit this website: <http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/fieldcrops/cotton/cnl072911.pdf> If you don't have internet or would like to receive a print copy of the article, give me a call at the office: 850.475.5230.

### **\$1.00 COTTON—USUALLY A GOOD SIGN, BUT NOT NOW**

Dec11 cotton is trying to remain at or near the \$1.00 level. *Prices have ignored problematic issues with the US crop* and instead taken a tumble based largely on demand weakness.

Dec11 has lost over 40 cents/lb (approximately 30% of value) since early June. The past 2 weeks have been particularly brutal—dropping 16 cents since July 8. Prices have been up or down limit or near so several times during this period. Dec11 dropped the limit to \$1.04 on July 12 but then rallied the limit to \$1.08 the next day. *This should have been an optimistic sign but prices could not hold that level and it's been downhill ever since.* We stand today at around 98 cents.

The support at the \$1.13-\$1.15 level failed to hold and that quickly took the market to the next level of support at \$1.00. It has been a struggle this week just to keep our head above water around \$1.00. Prices have traded as low as 94 ½ cents. The next target level for “support” will be at 85 to 90 cents. Let's hope we don't continue the slide to that level. *So far, “support” has been just another temporary step on the way down.*

Last week's USDA *Crop Progress* report showed the US cotton crop to be not too far behind normal in development. As of July 17, the crop was 71% squaring compared to 79% average. The crop was 31% setting bolls compared to 34% average. I say that to say this—*it really doesn't matter.* What's more important is that as of July 17, *40% of the US crop was rated in poor or very poor*

*condition.* In Texas, 57% was rated poor or very poor and in Georgia, 37%. In Oklahoma, 72% was poor or very poor.

The US crop is currently estimated by USDA at 16 million bales. There is already much talk around the industry that, due to high acreage abandonment and/or low yield, the crop might be closer to 15 mb after all is said and done. If the US crop comes in that low, it would be *the lowest US available supply (old crop carry-in stocks plus new crop) since 1998.* While this would seem to be a significant occurrence (and it still could be), the reality is that in terms of World supply and demand, a tight US situation can be of less importance if offset by increased (a) production in other countries and (b) decline in demand. *And right now, that seems to be what the market is focused on.*

Just a couple of weeks ago we were discussing some producers buying out contracts due to the expected short crop. Recently, I've had calls and emails from producers looking to do more pricing. Depending on how much you already have done and at what price, right now *getting back to the \$1.10 to \$1.20 level would be quite an accomplishment.* Until demand picks up, reaching even that level might be a challenge unless the US supply-side worries can get another foothold. But it's not a too unrealistic goal and I'd have to think that further downside risk is hopefully limited at this point.... hopefully, that 85 to 90-cent level will not occur. Source: Dr. Don Shurley, UGA Economist

# EXTENSION

# Farm Field Day

*West Florida Research and Education Center*

**August 25, 2011**

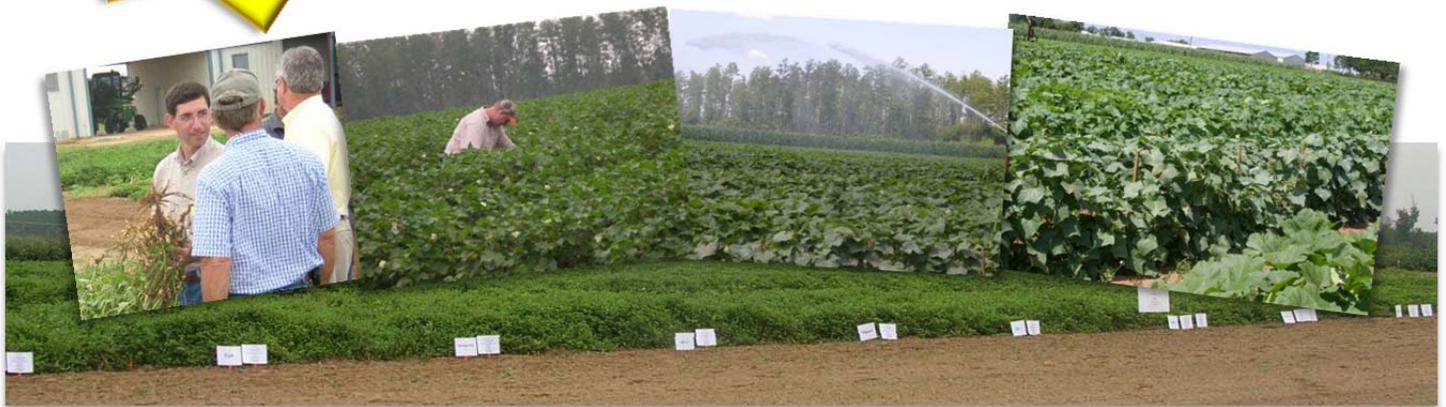
*Jay Research Facility*

*4253 Experiment Road*

*Jay, FL 32526*

CCA and  
CEU  
Credits  
Available

**Registration: 8:00AM**  
**Research Tour: 8:30AM**  
**Catered Lunch: 12:00PM**



**Register Online at [MiltonGators.com](http://MiltonGators.com)**

or

**Call the WFREC at 850-983-5216 ext. 113 or 850-393-7334**

## FIELD DAY TOPICS

- Peanut and Cotton Variety
- Peanut Diseases
- Cotton Density
- Specialty Crop Production
- Peanut Disease Management
- Cotton Fertility
- Castor Production
- Peanut Maturity
- Weed Management
- Cotton Longleaf Disease

## Florida MarketMaker Newsletter Feature

Florida MarketMaker is a **FREE** resource and service of the Florida Cooperative Extension and sponsored by a multitude of organizations that facilitate more effective marketing campaigns for enterprises from farm-to-fork, and everywhere in between.

When you **REGISTER** with MarketMaker, your customized business profile is available for consumers to access via powerful search features, wherever they are. MarketMaker's tools allow you to visualize and **CONNECT** with retailers, consumers, distributors, and other food supply chain participants by accessing information via a dynamic search and map system and through marketplace forums. Your business can **SUCCEED** in marketing its products with these features as well as through additional opportunities such as the monthly Business Spotlight, Taste of Florida, Now in Season, and Recipes.

Contact your local Extension Service to get more information and learn how MarketMaker can expand your farm or business opportunities. Visit <http://fl.foodmarketmaker.com> today to REGISTER. CONNECT. SUCCEED!

Florida MarketMaker Contacts:

Libbie Johnson – [libbiej@ufl.edu](mailto:libbiej@ufl.edu)

Allison Meharg – [allisonm@ufl.edu](mailto:allisonm@ufl.edu)