

2008 P.I.E. Program Tours Set

MEMPHIS, TENN.

The National Cotton Council has scheduled dates and locations for the 2008 Cotton Foundation Producer Information Exchange (P.I.E.) Program.

Now in its 20th year, the P.I.E. program has an overall goal of helping its participants improve yields and fiber quality. Upon completion of this year's four tours, the P.I.E. program will have exposed more than 800 U.S. cotton producers to innovative cotton production practices in regions different than their own.

This season, cotton producers from the Mid-South will see operations in Arizona and California on June 22-27; Southwest producers will travel to North Carolina on July 20-25; Far Western producers will visit Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee on August 10-15; and Southeastern producers will visit Texas on August 17-22. The NCC's Member Services staff, in conjunction with local producer associations, conducts the P.I.E. program, including participant selection. The program also receives support from The Cotton Foundation via a grant from Bayer CropScience.

Cotton Foundation President Charles Parker, a Senath, Mo., cotton producer, said the P.I.E. program enables cotton producers to gain new perspectives in such fundamental practices as land preparation, planting, fertilization, pest control, irrigation and harvesting as well as to observe unique ways in which their peers are using new technology.

"However, embracing new tools and production systems is not enough, today's producers need to achieve better farming efficiencies along with their yield and fiber quality," Parker said. "By offering firsthand observation and one-to-one interaction with innovative producers, P.I.E. is giving its participants a leg up on their quest for better efficiency and profitability."

Gary Gaar, U.S. sales manager, Bayer BioScience, said, "P.I.E. participants are leaders in the cotton industry, and we're glad to sponsor this program, as well as strengthen our ongoing partnership with cotton growers and the National Cotton Council. The information growers receive from these tours helps them enhance their own farming operations and build long-term friendships." △