

# Farmers Hear Experts At Crop Production Meeting

OPELOUSAS, LA.

Farmers received recommendations and advice from LSU AgCenter experts at a wheat and soybean production meeting Jan. 12.

"Variety selection is probably the most important thing you're going to do as a soybean producer," advised LSU AgCenter soybean specialist Ron Levy.

Controlling weeds early is essential for a good crop, Levy said. Rice farmers should consider Liberty Link soybeans because drift onto a rice crop from Liberty herbicide does not cause a significant yield loss like drift from Roundup.

Early planting is generally best, and the recommended time frame for planting Group VI soybeans is March 25 through April 30, he said. Group III and IV soybeans have a window of April 15 until May 10.

Herbicide-resistant weeds such as Johnson grass and pigweed are becoming more of a problem in Louisiana, Levy said.

Several new fungicides will be available this year for soybeans, said LSU AgCenter plant pathologist Boyd Padgett. Soybeans grown continuously in a field can result in increased disease, and a practice of reduced tillage may also contribute to a disease outbreak.

Soybeans can be stricken with the disease aerial blight if they are planted in a rice field that had a bad episode of sheath blight in the previous year, he said.

Some diseases cannot be eliminated from a field, Padgett said. For example, red crown rot in soybeans can be spread by farm equipment, but getting rid of it is impossible.

Red-banded stinkbugs were not a problem in the past two years, probably because of cold winters, said LSU AgCenter entomologist Jeff Davis. Because this winter, so far, has not been unusually cold, "probably we're going to have a higher stinkbug pressure."

Davis recommended using the highest rates for insecticide because reducing rates will promote resistance.

Most of the wheat grown in Louisiana is resistant to rust diseases, said LSU AgCenter wheat breeder Steve Harrison, but that could change. "There's never been a resistant variety that stayed that way forever."

The Louisiana wheat crop appears to have escaped outbreaks of the Hessian fly, Harrison said. "If we were going to have a Hessian fly problem, we would know it by now."

LSU AgCenter weed scientist Bill Williams said spraying for weeds four to six weeks before planting will help control insects. Also, some weeds emit chemicals that retard a plant's growth.

The weed henbit is becoming more difficult to control, and fall applications of the herbicides 2,4-D and glyphosate can be effective, Williams said. △



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