

Lon Mann Cotton Research Station Field Day And Open House Set

MARIANNA, ARK.

Area farmers are invited to discuss ongoing research and other topics of interest with University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture scientists during a field day and open house Thursday, Aug. 7, at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station. The open house will include health screenings and health insurance information for area residents.

Station Director Claude Kennedy said health screening services will be provided by the Delta Area Health Education Center, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Free screening will be offered for blood pressure, blood sugar and body fat. Dr. Jessica Pillow, a dermatologist, will provide free skin screening. Cholesterol screening will be offered at a charge of \$20, and it requires fasting for 12 hours before the test.

Stephanie Foreman of the government-sponsored ARHealthNetworks will provide information on health insurance for farmers, small businesses, families and individuals.

Kennedy said the field day will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at noon. National Cotton Council President Larry McClendon of Marianna will give a luncheon address.

The program was planned with the assistance of a local committee, Kennedy said. Health screenings are being provided to increase awareness of services available for early detection and prevention of major health problems.

All presentations will be in the new Dan Felton, Jr. Building. Topics and presenters include:

- Overview of ongoing research, Dr. Fred Bourland, director of the Northeast Research and Extension Center, Keiser;
- When Round-Up won't kill pigweed, Dr. Ken Smith, weed scientist at the Southeast Research and Extension Center, Monticello;
- Late season water and insect management in cotton, Dr. Tina Teague, entomologist at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro;
- Stretching the grower's fertilizer dollars, Dr. Morteza Mozaffari, director of the Soil Testing and Research Laboratory, Marianna;
- Managing Arkansas corn, Dr. Jason Kelley, state feed grains specialist;
- Grain basis and marketing issues, Dr. Kelly Bryant, agricultural economist and director, Southeast Research and Extension Center, Monticello.

The station will mark 79 years of rich history

of agricultural research and extension service during the field day, Kennedy said. "The Arkansas Legislature appropriated \$7,000 to purchase 160 acres in 1925 to establish Cotton Branch Station with 160 acres. A brick residence and office building were built the following year, and by 1928 the station was up and running. Cotton Branch held its first field day in 1929 with over 500 farmers, visitors and gov-



Cotton breeder Fred Bourland talks about the cotton breeding program at the University of Arkansas System's Division of Agriculture during a field day in 2006 at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Center near Marianna.

ernment officials from the surrounding area."

Kennedy said the station today consists of 653 acres, newer buildings, updated farm and research equipment, and it is in the final phase of irrigation expansion that began in the spring of 2001. Research includes evaluation of cotton, soybean, wheat, canola, grain sorghum and corn cultivars and breeding lines, as well as studies to determine optimum fertility, irrigation and pest management for these crops. The station is also the site of the Arkansas Soil Testing and Research Laboratory, built in 1954.

"Field days have long been a common way of educating growers about new practices and technologies since the beginning of the University of Arkansas extension and research efforts in the early twentieth century," Kennedy said. "This year, our field day planning committee felt our farmers would be best served by an indoors briefing on the hot topics for producers and our research program."

He added, "Our new facility and the many other improvements show the strong commitment by the U of A System's Division of Agriculture and the local people who helped make them possible. One thing is for sure: Agriculture is still very vital to our community and we must be here to serve." △