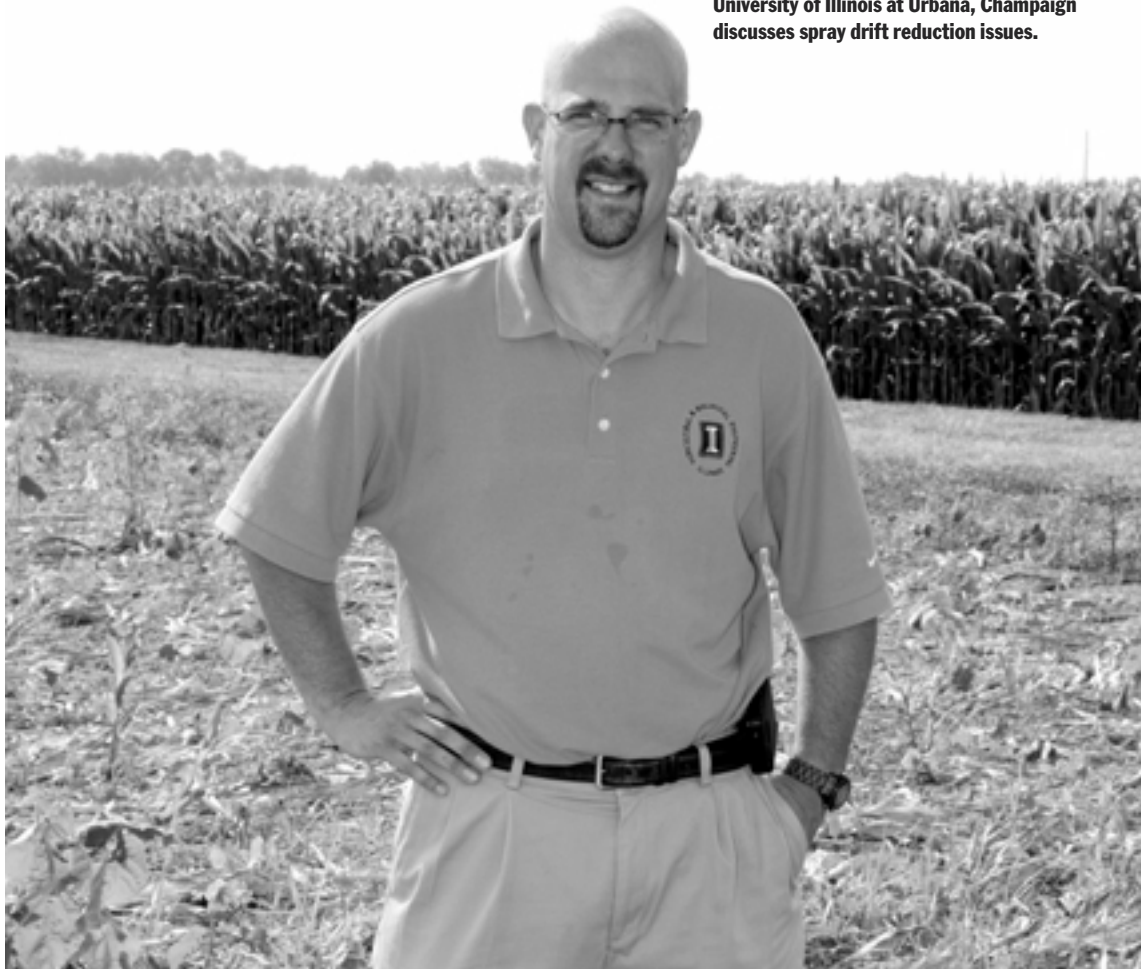


Dr. Scott Bretthauer, extension specialist in application technology with the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign discusses spray drift reduction issues.



Managing Drift

Specialist Explains Techniques To Reduce Spray Drift

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Drift reduction is an issue covered recently by Dr. Scott Bretthauer, extension specialist in application technology with the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign.

He discussed the reality of spray drift regulations, covering what the EPA is trying to do in terms of getting clear and consistent language on labels in regards to reducing drift.

“Specifically one of the new programs they will be rolling out is entitled Drift Reduction Technologies or DRTs where they’re actually going to put recommendations for DRTs on the label,” Bretthauer said. “That way, if a pesticide label requires a certain buffer zone distance that you need to avoid when making an application you’ll be able to use DRT drift production technology to reduce that buffer zone. The whole goal is to encourage applicators to use these technologies to reduce the risk of spray drift.”

Bretthauer also covered some issues specific to Illinois including the drift watch website, which allows growers of specialty crops to register their crops, the location and the type of crop. Then applicators can check that website to see if they’re going to be spraying a pesticide near those specialty crops and take measures not to drift onto those fields. The whole goal is to initiate communication to reduce drift.

Bretthauer also discussed some of the law-

suits that can be involved with drift, issues involving the regulations that will be dealt with if you get caught drifting on someone else’s crop. In some cases those lawsuits are very time consuming and expensive.

“The biggest take home message is while applicators are aware of drift, they also need to be aware of the regulations at the federal and state level and how those will impact the application they’re making,” he said. “In terms of actually using these drift reduction technologies and working toward mitigating the risk of drift, yes there’s extension publications out there, nozzle manufacturers have catalogues that explain the different nozzle types and how they can be used to reduce drift and then, of course, they need to read the label. The applicator needs to become familiar with that label. Some of this new language will be on there in the next couple of years. There will be an explanation of the DRT technology and where they can find it. That program isn’t out yet but we expect it to come out in the next year or two.”

It is important to become familiar with both the federal and more specifically and probably more importantly the Illinois laws regarding drift.

“I think the biggest thing is that this drift watch is supposed to help them be more aware what’s out there,” he added. “Applicators need to be aware of what is next to the crops that they are spraying.”

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