

Milan Research Variety Trial Results Available

Data Posted Shortly After Harvest

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Dr. Fred Allen, University of Tennessee Extension Specialist, coordinates the statewide variety-testing program at the research and education centers (RECs) and works with county agents on the county standardized strip trials (CST) in Tennessee. The variety-testing program uses from six to eight of the UT RECs depending on the crop, and from eight to twelve counties in the CST for a given test. Taking into consideration all of the crops, there are about 26 Tennessee counties participating in the CST and as many as four counties in western Kentucky. The REC tests will often have experimental lines that are not yet released for commercial sale; whereas the CST tests will have the major varieties that are being marketed in the state. Thus, there are fewer entries in the CSTs than in the REC tests, but it is required that the companies participate in both tests. There is good overlap between the entries in the on-farm strip trials conducted by the extension agents and the entries in the REC tests. There are about 30 participants enrolling varieties in the University of Tennessee variety-testing program. The participants are composed of seed companies as well as university and USDA plant breeding programs. In 2009, the UT variety-testing program is evaluating 144 corn hybrids, 222 soybean varieties, eight grain sorghums and 64 wheat varieties.

Growing seasons with increased disease infestation can separate the varieties according to Allen. “We put varieties of the same maturity group in head to head tests to that our producers can look at the data and then determine the top performing varieties when grown together in multiple environments in the same year. The diverse environments assure that you get a

spread in yield and some varieties are clearly better than others. If you test the same varieties two to three years then you see the ones that repeatedly perform best. The cream rises to the top, so to speak.”

New this year is earlier availability of the data. Allen said, “this year as the different soybean maturity group are harvested in the REC and CST tests, we are going to analyze and summarize each maturity group and post it on our website, <http://varietytrials.tennessee.edu>. Usually we wait until we get all of the maturity groups harvested and analyzed and then post all of the data. With the discounts and deals for earlier seed bookings available to producers, there is



Dr. Fred Allen, University of Tennessee Extension Specialist, coordinates the statewide variety-testing program at the research and education centers.

Photo by John LaRose

constant pressure for earlier access to the yield data. This year we are going to try to get the results out faster so that our agents, producers and seed company personnel will have the data to aid their decision making as soon as feasible.”

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