

School's In Session for Crop Management

Issue:

Continued low commodity prices have placed more pressure on farmers to improve their bottom line as well as impacted the viability of many rural communities. Regional cutting edge information on new IPM and crop and nutrient management strategies is critical for local farmers to remain profitable. The development of the Certified Crop Adviser program under the auspices of the American Society of Agronomy has provided Extension with an additional tool with which to assist the farming community's agricultural competitiveness and profitability. By providing education programs to certified crop advisers (CCAs), Extension can more efficiently impact a greater proportion of the farm community.

What Has Been Done:

The Mid-Atlantic Crop Management School is an excellent example of a multi-state (Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia) and multi-agency (university, NRCS, and Department of Agriculture) program that provides new educational information to a range of interested parties. The founding committee prioritized educational topics in each of five categories—nutrient management, crop management, pest management, soil and water management, and environmental interactions. This school is designed to provide continuing educational opportunities for Certified Crop Advisers, Nutrient Management Consultants, agency personnel (NRCS, Conservation Districts, and Cooperative Extension), independent consultants, and a few growers, providing valuable, applied information that can be used to improve incomes in farm and rural communities.

Impact:

Certified crop advisers who responded to an evaluation survey reported that the average value of knowledge gained at the school would result in an increase of \$24.52 per acre in income for farmers (their clientele). Based on the total acreage reported at the school, this translates into a 23.5 million dollar impact for farmers in the six state region served by the school. Respondents to the survey had a total of 1,115 years of consulting experience. Ninety seven percent of the survey respondents said that the information presented at the school will help them provide better crop management advice to their clientele. The respondents said that they consult or advise on a total of 959,590 acres in the mid-Atlantic region.

Primary Impact Area:

Extension

Funding Sources:

Delaware Cooperative Extension System (State, Federal, and County funds)

Maryland Cooperative Extension System (State, Federal, and County funds)

West Virginia University Cooperative Extension System (State funds)

NRCS of Maryland

Maryland and Delaware Conservation District Programs, Federal and State (DE) IPM Money
Crop Management School fees, Private Industry

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