

Making a Difference

2017 Commodity Marketing and Precision Agriculture Education

Developed by:

Corrie Bowen
County Extension Agent – Ag/NR
Wharton County

Relevance

Cotton, grain Sorghum, soybean, corn, and rice production continue to be a major economic force in Wharton County. USDA reports **232,913** acres planted in 2017 in these five major crops for Wharton County. The 2015 Texas Community Futures Forum identified that crop producers will need to keep abreast of marketing opportunities, precision agriculture practices, and variety/seed technology developments to remain competitive in the industry. The use of commodity pricing strategies and precision agriculture technology will be important to maintain a crop producers' economic sustainability in the years to come.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee was instrumental in developing, delivering, and evaluating educational programs in 2017 that addressed commodity marketing and use of precision agriculture technology. The following educational conferences and seminars were conducted in 2017:

- Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference – January 26, 2017. Mr. Mac Young, Extension Program Specialist-Risk Management gave a grain market outlook, and discussed marketing plans and opportunities for 2017. A speaker panel composed of Wharton County crop producers, Michael Popp and Keith Bram, and Dr. Ron Schnell discussed current application of precision ag on their farms, and real life application of precision ag in Texas row crops.
- Grain Marketing Meeting in cooperation with United Ag Coop – May 10, 2017. Dr. Mark Welch, Extension Economist and Grain Marketing Specialist presented data on current grain markets and marketing opportunities for the 2017 grain crops. Dr. Tom Isakeit presented on disease management in grain crops and brought awareness to the grain industry of a few new, and emerging fungal diseases.
- Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop – October 19, 2017. This workshop addressed several current topics in the grain markets: Budgeting Decision Tools: Determining Break-Even and Costs of Production, Mr. Mac Young; US Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency Update, Francie Tolle, Regional Office Director, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; 2018 Crop Insurance Choices, Tom Kelly, Wiese Crop Insurance; Crop Insurance Decision Tool, Dr. Steven Klose, AgriLife Extension Economist; Developing a Management Plan - Incorporating Insurance into Production and Farm Plan, Dr. Mark Welch; Cotton Outlook, Dr. John Robinson, AgriLife Extension Cotton Marketing Economist; Grain Outlook, Marketing Tools and Strategies, Dr. Mark Welch.

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The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Results

Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of Feed Grain and Cotton Conference a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 64 of 114 (56.1%) completed evaluations. 64.1% of participants plan to adopt at least one best management practice presented. Participants report a total anticipated economic benefit of \$736,889, or \$17,544.96 per farm.

% at Good/Excellent, Pct Who Increased Understanding: Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

TOPICS	Pct. at Good or Excellent Before the Program	Pct. at Good or Excellent After the Program	Pct. Point Difference (After vs. Before)	Pct. With Any Increase in Understanding
Application of precision ag techniques under upper gulf coast cropping conditions	20.6%	81%	60.4	76.2%

Grain Marketing Meeting in Cooperation with United Ag Coop

To determine the programmatic results of the Grain Marketing Meeting a retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 14 of 20 (70%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 6,086 acres of corn and 5,236 acres of grain sorghum managed. Participants reported a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$45,748, or \$7.52 per acre. 75% of participants intend to adopt the utilization of price risk management tools, such as options, futures, and crop insurance. Participants increased their knowledge of current grain market fundamentals to consider in writing their grain marketing plan by 36%.

Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop

A retrospective post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the workshop. 9 of 17 (52.9%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 7,712 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$96,400, or \$12,050 average per farm. 88.8% of the participants were Mostly or Completely Satisfied with the program.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Understanding how to develop a working crop budget How to use risk management tools and confidence in using them	1.89	3	58.73%
How crop insurance choices and marketing strategies work together	2.11	3.22	52.61%