

2018 Pesticide Applicator Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:
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Relevance

For year 2018 Wharton County, Texas has 592 pesticide applicators licensed with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Private Pesticide Applicators are required to obtain fifteen (15) CEUs (continued education credits) every five years in order to renew their license. Commercial and Non-Commercial Applicators are required to obtain 5 CEUs every year in order to renew their license. There is a substantial audience and a need for Extension to provide the educational opportunities for these applicators to obtain their CEU credits. In addition, new applicators seek opportunities throughout the year to take the certification course at the Wharton County Extension Office to obtain their license.

Pesticide applicators generate and accumulate a significant amount pesticide waste in the form of empty containers and unused pesticides. Pesticides become unused when either pesticides become unregistered for use by the EPA, or become unidentifiable when product labels deteriorate or separate from containers. Regionally sponsored pesticide collection events are necessary to give applicators a responsible, and economically feasible source to properly dispose of pesticide waste.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee provided for one (1) individual course in 2018 that offered five (5) CEUs. The committee planned and conducted this event based on client need and evaluation results from the 2017 Conference. This 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference is scheduled each year at the Wharton County Youth Fairgrounds in Crescent. CEUs were also awarded at the following seminars and workshops scheduled throughout the year: January 11, 2018 Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference ;January 24, 2018 Western Rice Belt Conference; January 25, 2018 Grain Handlers Conference; February 1, 2018 5-CEU Conference; February/March 2018 Auxin Specific Applicator Training; April 17, 2018 Ag Symposium; July 17, 2018 Wharton County Cotton Turn Row Meeting; and at seed meetings and/or field days for: DowAgroSciences®, Pioneer Seed®/Kresta Farms, and Krenek Seed Company. CEU credits are also made available to pesticide applicators by viewing a series of Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

The mandatory Certification Training for potential pesticide applicators to obtain their pesticide applicator license was provided by the Wharton County Extension Office throughout the year on an as-needed basis or when requested.

Ag Science Teachers located throughout Texas is another audience of Pesticide License holders that County Extension Agent, Corrie Bowen educates at the annual Vocational Ag Teachers Association of Texas (VATAT) Annual Conference. Since 2005 Agent Bowen has facilitated a Pesticide Applicator

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

Certification Workshop and a Pesticide Applicator Recertification Workshop at the VATAT annual conference. Ag Science teachers must also acquire their required recertification credits, but they often have difficulty attending the recertification course while they are teaching in the classroom. Offering CEUs at their annual conference helps teachers acquire their needed recertification credits. 2018 marked Agent Bowen's 14th consecutive year cooperating with the VATAT, providing and facilitating their annual pesticide workshops.

Results

Eight (8) new applicators attended the Private Pesticide Applicator training and testing sessions offered at the Wharton County Extension Office in the year 2018.

For year 2018 Wharton County awarded a total of **31.0 CEUs** at group meetings to a total of **806** individuals. In addition to CEUs obtained at group meetings, a total of eight (**8**) licensed Pesticide Applicators obtained a total of **21** hours of CEU credits by viewing our Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office.

February 1, 2018 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was conducted on the day of the 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference. **37 of 111 (33.3%)** completed the evaluation instrument. Participants reported 65,066 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of **\$215,957** or **\$3.32** per acre.

Client Change Level of Understanding: February 1, 2018 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Changes to WPS laws that went into effect in 2018	1.94	3.17	41.0%
Annual auxin training is required prior to applying Engenia, Xtendirnax or FeXapan	1.41	3.44	67.7%
Auxin training is not required to purchase seed or chemistry	1.53	3.41	62.7%

November 28, 2018 Waste Pesticide Collection Event at Wharton County

On November 28, 2018 I cooperated with the Wharton County Leadership Advisory Board, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agricultural and Environmental Safety, Stericycle Company, and US Ag Recycling to coordinate and conduct the first state-coordinated, free pesticide waste collection event held in the past 9 years. This pesticide collection event was advertised to pesticide applicators in Wharton and surrounding counties, and was held from 8:00 am. to 12:00 p.m. at the Wharton County Fairgrounds on November 28, 2018. One Hundred Seventeen (**117**) applicators properly disposed of a total of **121,836 pounds** of pesticide waste. **117 of 117** completed surveys as applicators waiting in line for two hours, each, while a total of **114** vehicles waited to drop off their pesticide waste. 47% (55 of 117) had been storing their unused pesticides for over 8 years, waiting for proper disposal; 44% for 5 to 8 years; 8% for 1-3 years. 42.7% came from Wharton County; 18.8% from Colorado and Fort Bend Counties; 5.9% from Matagorda County; 5.9% from Brazoria County; 5.1 % from Austin County; and the remaining 21.6 came from counties as far away as Trinity, Polk, Walker, Grimes, Burleson and Victoria counties. Pesticide applicators came from 19 counties to dispose of their pesticide waste; 42.7% came from Wharton County; 18.8% from Colorado and Fort Bend Counties; 5.9% from Matagorda County; 5.9% from Brazoria County; 5.1 % from Austin County; and the remaining 21.6 came from counties as far away as Trinity, Polk, Walker, Grimes, Burleson and Victoria counties. The estimated total savings for producers in the seven-county area was **\$228,000**.