

Agriculture and Natural Resources

2019 Commodity Marketing, Technology and Industrial Hemp Education

Developed by:

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Relevance

Cotton, grain Sorghum, soybean, corn, and rice production continue to be a major economic force in Wharton County. USDA reports **236,282** total acres planted in 2019 in these five major crops for Wharton County. The 2015 and 2019 Texas Community Futures Forum identified that crop producers will need to keep abreast of marketing opportunities, precision agriculture practices, variety/seed technology developments, and alternative crops (e.g. Industrial Hemp) to remain competitive in the industry.

Wharton County ranks 22nd in the State in total agricultural receipts and 2nd in the State in total value of crops, including nursery and greenhouse production. The 2017 Census of Agriculture for Wharton County reports \$208,540,000 in total agricultural receipts, which is down 44% from the \$373,637,000 reported in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. As costs of production continue to increase and farm income declines, applied research and marketing education is needed 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 2019 that addressed new crop system technology, commodity marketing, and informed producers of a new and emerging industrial hemp industry. The following educational conferences and seminars were conducted in 2019:

- Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference – January 24, 2019. This event is organized as a multi-county program in Wharton, Texas (Wharton County) – Wharton, Matagorda, and Colorado County cooperating. Selection of grain and cotton production topics and presenters is directed by Row Crops Committee members in each of the three counties.
- Wharton County Soybean and Cotton Turn Row Meeting – July 10, 2019. A two-part turn row meeting on one day. The first stop was to the A&M Crop Testing Program's Soybean Variety Trial at the Howard and Dolly Wittig Farm in Lane City, Texas. The next stop was to the Cotton RACE trial in Crescent at the Michael Beard Farm.
- Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop – October 17, 2019. This workshop addressed several current topics in the grain markets: Budgeting Decision Tools, Mr. Mac Young; Cotton Outlook, Dr. John Robinson; Grain Outlook, Dr. Mark Welch; Marketing Strategies and 'What if' Scenarios, Dr. Mark Welch and Dr. John Robinson.
- Industrial Hemp Seminar – December 10, 2019 – This program was planned and conducted in cooperation between the Wharton Row Crops Committee and the City of Wharton Economic Development Corporation. Calvin Trostle, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist, Lubbock provided an introduction to the hemp industry, discussing hemp products and processing as well as the differences in growing seeds and transplants, growing for CBD oil or fiber, and agronomic

considerations for growing industrial hemp. Dr. George Knapek, Texas A&M AgriLife Agriculture and Food Policy Specialist presented Economic Considerations for Industrial Hemp in Texas.

Results

Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference

To determine the programmatic results of the Feed Grain and Cotton Conference a retrospective-post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the conference. 61 of 128 (47.65%) completed evaluations. 72.5% of respondents indicated that they intend to adopt measuring sustained wind speeds for two minutes, recorded at boom height; 75.7% intend to adopt bollworm management strategies. Participants reported 73,737 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$415,424 or \$5.63 per acre.

Cotton and Grain Risk Management and Marketing Workshop

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was administered the day of the workshop. 23 of 32 (71.8%) completed evaluations. Participants reported 16,656 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$316,464, or \$19 average per acre. 95.66% 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
How to use risk management tools	2.13	3.26	53.05%
Tools available to manage risk and alternative marketing strategies	2.22	3.35	50.90%
Ability to communicate with partners in my operation about risk management topics and concerns	2.17	3.17	46.08%

Industrial Hemp Seminar

Fifty-seven (57) prospective producers attended the Industrial Hemp Seminar. 36 of 57 (63%) completed evaluations. The seminar introduced producers to preliminary agronomic practices, economic considerations, and current industry concerns while the Texas Department of Agriculture awaits USDA approval of our State production rules. A retrospective-post evaluation instrument measured client change and their level of understanding of industrial hemp production.

Client Change Level of Understanding: Industrial Hemp Seminar

Program Content	Mean Before	Mean After	Percent Change
Cannabidiol (CBD) is not an oil, rather a lipid (fat) extracted from floral structures	1.75	3.31	52%
Current economic consideration for industrial hemp	1.75	3.11	45.33%
Preliminary agronomic considerations for producing industrial hemp	1.60	2.96	45.33%
Current industry concerns related to poor seed quality and poor seed germination	1.73	3.29	52%

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