

Agriculture and Natural Resources

2020 Pesticide Applicator Programming in Wharton County

Developed by:

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Relevance

For the year 2020 Wharton County, Texas has **572** (compared to 586 in 2019) 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. The Wharton County Row Crops Committee and Western Rice Belt Production Conference Committee identify Continued Education Units (CEUs) as a priority of program planning for Wharton County.

Response

The Wharton County Row Crops Committee provided for one (1) individual course in 2020 that offered five (5) CEUs. The committee planned, promoted, and conducted this event based on client need and evaluation results from the 2019 Conference. This 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference is scheduled each year at the Wharton County Youth Fairgrounds in Crescent, TX. CEUs were also awarded at the following seminars and workshops scheduled throughout the year: January 14, 2020 Grain Handlers Conference; January 15, 2020 Western Rice Belt Conference; January 23, 2020 Upper Gulf Coast Feed Grain and Cotton Conference ;February 13, 2020 5-CEU Conference; February/March 2020 Auxin Specific Applicator Training; April 14, 2020 Ag Symposium; and at seed meetings and/or field days for: 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 licensed pesticide applicators that County Extension Agent, Corrie Bowen educates. Since 2005 Agent Bowen has facilitated a Pesticide Applicator Certification Workshop and a Pesticide Applicator Recertification Workshop at the Vocational Ag Teachers Association of Texas (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. 2020 marked Agent Bowen's 16th consecutive year cooperating with the VATAT Board of Directors, providing and facilitating their annual pesticide workshops. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the VATAT Pesticide Workshops were held virtually in July via Zoom®.

Results

Six (6) new applicators attended the Private Pesticide Applicator training and testing sessions offered at the Wharton County Extension Office in the year 2020. The number of Private Applicators completing the certification training at the Wharton Office has declined due to Covid-19, whereas applicators have an option of also completing the training online.

For year 2020 Wharton County awarded a total of twenty-three (23.0) CEUs at group meetings to a total of 779 individuals. In addition to CEUs obtained at group meetings, a total of seven (7) licensed Pesticide Applicators obtained a total of 14 hours of CEU credits by viewing our Last Chance CEU videos at the Wharton County Extension Office. It's estimated that due to Covid-19, the number of pesticide applicators reached with recertification credits at group meetings is down 17% compared to year 2019.

February 13, 2020 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

A retrospective-post evaluation instrument was conducted on the day of the 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference. 115 of 115 (100%) completed the evaluation instrument! Participants reported 111,421 acres managed, and a total anticipated economic benefit to their operations of \$714,292 or \$6.41 per acre.

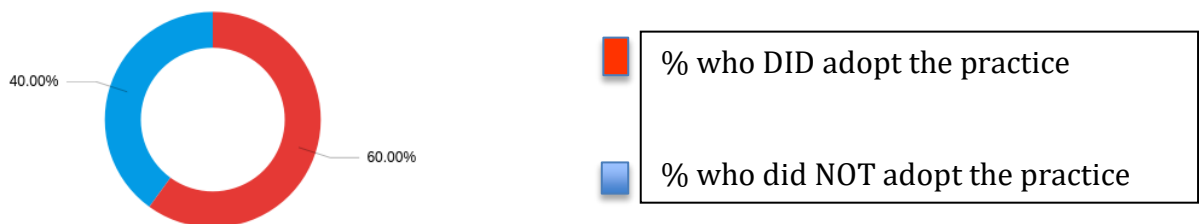
Client Change Level of Understanding: February 1, 2018 5-CEU Pesticide Recertification Conference

TOPICS	Mean Value BEFORE	Mean Value AFTER	Percent Increase
Impact of predation on the livestock industry	2.24	3.45	40.3%

July 27, 2020 VATAT Virtual Pesticide Workshop

Thirty-six (36) Ag Science Teachers attended the Virtual TDA Pesticide Recertification Workshop via Zoom, which addressed new herbicide chemistry, school IPM laws, and fly control in school project barns. These topics were identified by Ag Teachers at the 2019 VATAT conference workshops. 15 of 36 (42%) completed a Qualtrics Survey in August 2020 for the Pesticide Recertification Workshop. 86% (12 of 15) estimate an economic benefit from participating in this virtual workshop. (Chart 1) 60% of the Ag Teachers adopted the practice of rotating insecticides by group number and by mode of action to avoid building insect resistance that was taught at the 2019 VATAT Pesticide Workshop. Participants increased their awareness of the Texas Administrative Code Title 4, Part 1, Chapter 7, Subchapter H, Division 7: Pest Management Program for School Districts, sections §7.201-§7.205 by 74%. Participants increased their knowledge of fly control technologies by 67.4%.

Chart 1. Percentage of Audience who adopted the practice of rotating insecticides in the past year to avoid building insect resistance.



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