



Agricultural and Natural Resources Southeast Iowa

October 2008

Agricultural Extension Specialists, in partnership with Iowa State University and the 23 counties in the Southeast Iowa Area, build partnerships and provide research-based learning opportunities to improve the quality of life in Iowa.

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Crop Advantage Series in Southeast Iowa is a Huge Success!

Agriculture is rapidly changing, with new technologies being introduced every year. Crop producers must keep up with the changing technologies in order to stay competitive. One problem with traditional winter crop production programs is that it is not possible to offer all of the topics that are of interest to crop producers and agribusiness professionals in the area. In addition, there is a lag-time between the time researchers at Iowa State University compile research data and when it is submitted to crop producers across the state. The Crop Advantage Series allows researchers to present their latest information and allows crop producers to choose the topics of their choice.

Crop Advantage Series conferences were held at three locations (Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Ottumwa) in southeast Iowa in 2008. The Ottumwa location was a first-time event and was well supported. Participants attended two keynote presentations on Applying Corn Fungicides, Crops and Weather, or Planning Nitrogen Applications. They were also able to choose three workshops from twelve that were offered at each location. Workshop topics included: pest management, digitized soil survey, the bio-economy, marketing corn and soybeans, soybean row spacing, managing Soybean Cyst Nematode and Soybean Sudden Death Syndrome, soil testing and nutrient management and early season corn problems. Producers were also given the opportunity to receive Continuing Instruction Course credits for Private Pesticide Applicator Certification.

Almost 700 crop producers attended the three conferences. Ninety per cent of the evaluations rated the meetings as good or excellent at all three locations. At Cedar Rapids, the average value placed on the information received by the attendees was \$17.31 per acre, with the average respondent managing 721 acres (N=119). This suggests that for a price of less than \$50, the average attendee got a value of over \$10,000. One grower at Ottumwa commented that using the Maximum Return to Nitrogen recommendation on his 800 acres of corn would reduce his nitrogen cost by \$16,000 over the nitrogen rates that he had been applying.





A student recruitment day was held at the Southeast ISU Research Farm in Crawfordsville in April. 100 area students were in attendance and were educated on topics such as cheese making, DNA, livestock and meat safety, biotech in crop production, and agriculture careers.

Selected 2008 Southeast Educational Opportunities

Ornamental and Turfgrass Applicators

November 12 – County Offices

Ag Outlook

November 17 – Amana Colonies

IA-IL Fruit & Vegetable Symposium

November 21 – Bettendorf

Iowa Organic Conference

November 24 – Ames

PQA Plus

October 21, November 18, December 16 – Various Sites

Crop Advantage Series 2009

January 7 – Cedar Rapids

January 9 – Burlington

January 22 – Ottumwa

Overall Women's Conference

January 29 & 20, 2009

Davenport

For information about these and other agricultural and natural resources programs, check online at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/>

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Helping Iowans become their best.

SE Iowa Ag Extension Specialists deliver

Manure Applicator Training Protects the Environment

Improper or over application of manure can lead to environmental problems of excess nutrient loss to surface waters, runoff carrying sediment and organic material, or spills of manure directly entering surface water. Large livestock producers, primarily swine producers, need continuing instruction credits in order to renew their manure applicator permits. To meet this need, Manure Applicator Certification meetings were conducted in 18 locations in southeast Iowa during January and February of 2008 reaching 357 producers. In addition to required materials on rules for land application, information was provided to participants on manure management planning, adjusting application rates based on manure tests, dealing with catastrophic death losses, and sales of manure. Data from swine manure plots at the Southeast Research Farm near Crawfordsville have been used in these meetings documenting the fertility value of the manure. Even though most producers came only because "they had to" for the applicator certification, 92% indicated they received information that was useful for their farm operation.

Iowa Master Gardeners Adding Value to Iowa

The Iowa Master Gardener program started in 1979 with its first pilot training session held in Scott County. The first class had 17 participants. Today, nearly 2,500 active Master Gardeners are dedicated volunteers throughout the state. The main focus of the program is to provide the best horticultural practices to participants and have them pass that information along to others in their community. The training session consists of 40 hours of classroom instruction on topics such as botany, soils, landscape plants and Integrated Pest Management. At the end of the classroom instruction, participants are asked to provide at least 40 hours of volunteer service back to their communities. Examples of past volunteer service includes, but is not limited to writing articles for publication, planning and hosting gardening fairs, radio shows, planting and maintaining public landscape beds, and giving presentations to school children, other service organizations, and guests at county fairs. Master Gardeners have consistently reported over 80,000 hours of volunteer service to the betterment of Iowans yearly.

Private Pesticide Training Providing Vital Information

Private Pesticide Applicators must maintain a current certification in order to apply restricted use pesticides. The three-year certification may be renewed by taking a test when the current certificate expires or by attending a Continuing Instruction Course during each of the three years during which the expiring certificate was in force. Approximately 3,500 Private Pesticide Applicators in Southeast Iowa attend Continuing Instruction Courses. Even though many applicators feel they are essentially required to attend, over 96% of the attendees indicated the program provided information and education that will be useful for their operation. Nearly 99% of the attendees indicated that the presenters were knowledgeable and well prepared. Overall, over 96% of the attendees rated the program as good or excellent.

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... and justice for all

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Our Mission - ISU Extension builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa.