

Happy New Year!!!

We are off and running into 2016 as many of you can tell with all of the email traffic this last week (sorry about that). I just got back from a very good professional development opportunity in New Orleans at the Beltwide Cotton Conference. I had the opportunity to hear about new releases of cotton varieties for our area by many companies and updates on research that's going on in weeds, economics, diseases, and fertility. Along those lines, I heard presentations from Blayne Reed and Katie Lewis on their applied research projects. It was outstanding representation from both of them and excellent information. I would highly recommend you to plan to attend in Dallas next year. It is also good to be home for a couple of days!

Texas Corn Producers Voting

You all have received an email from me and David Gibson explaining the elections being held for board members of the Texas Corn Producers Association. Our role in this is to have ballots available for producers to pick up at your office. They will vote and mail in their own ballots. Print off the double sided ballots and place them in an area that everyone in your office can find. It is important for your secretaries and co-workers to know where the ballots are located and procedures for the voting. We have a small but important role in this process. Make sure we do our part.

CEU's and Fee Based Programs

January is packed with great opportunities for producers to learn and gain continuing education units. A couple of reminders about our role in providing CEU's for applicators are provided below;

- We are entrusted by TDA to provide 3 CEU's without any prior approval. Our agency is the only one with this privilege. We must make sure we follow the guidelines set forth by TDA if we want to continue with this opportunity.
- Topics related to pesticides are the only things that can be counted for CEU's at our meetings. For example; range topics, unless you are dealing with weed and brush control are not acceptable or irrigation topics unless chemigation is a topic or risk management discussions, they are not eligible. Make sure that CEU's are only given on topics associated with pesticide use or prevention.
- Topics that last Fifty (50) minutes can be allowed to provide an hour of CEU's for private, noncommercial, and commercial applicators. Anything less than that is not eligible for CEU's. The process is set up for an hour learning equals an hour of CEU's.
- I highly encourage all of you to use your scanners at programs. I know initially it can be a hassle but in the long run it will save you time. If you can't or don't use the scanners to register at meetings remember that official rosters need to be completed on the appropriate forms and information TYPED not hand written.
- As we have discussed in the past, programs need to be built to meet our producer's educational needs. Those topics that help them prepare for difficult decisions they face with their operations. Many of these topics warrant CEU consideration and we should provide those when appropriate. However, the only **expectation** is you provide CEU's when they are warranted. There is no number of CEU's you are required to meet during the year.

- Fee based programs are expected on all Ag/NR programs conducted in your county. If you are unsure if a program is meeting these criteria, call and let's discuss this prior to making the decision. There will be very few programs that are exempt from this when providing Extension education at county, district, or regional programs.

Thanks for taking these responsibilities seriously and if you have questions regarding the eligibility of a topic on a program for CEU's or fees, call me. It is a great responsibility to be able to provide CEU's to your producers but it's not our mission. Our mission is to provide relevant, research based information to our producers that educate them in areas of need. If these topics are eligible for some CEU's than we have killed two birds with one stone. Let me know if you have questions.

Result Demonstration Summaries

As with each year, result demonstration summaries are due at the end of the year. At this point, I have received only a handful. The templates for your summaries can be found on the following link <http://extensionanr.tamu.edu/>. If you have the results compiled for these tests, send them in immediately. If you are waiting on results, send them in as soon as the results are compiled. I look forward to seeing and sharing your successes. These will be displayed on the North Region website and the state demonstration site.

Professional Development

This week you received an email regarding your choices for a professional development tract for 2016. Thank you for getting that information back to me in a timely manner. Just a reminder, you are required to attend all trainings in your focused professional tract. These are set up to be focused, in-depth and timely. At the end of the year, it is expected that you develop some competency and confidence in this particular area. You should also know that you are invited to attend any of the face to face or on-line trainings in areas outside of your required training. We all have different levels of understanding and needs. This approach allows you to learn at your own pace outside of your focused area. Participate in these optional opportunities as you see the need to learn.

I would also like the more experienced agents and IPM agents to attend some of the trainings where you have expertise. Your participation is so valuable in helping mentor new agents and makes the process much more successful. Look over the dates and see where you can contribute. I know the specialists would love your involvement.

Reminders

As you may have noticed, I plan to send a list of trainings related to professional development at the beginning of each month. This will remind you of your obligation or opportunity to participate. The other reminders I've started and will continue are upcoming programs and the need to contact specialists in an appropriate and timely manner. I have seen correspondence from many of you regarding upcoming programs and I appreciate your staying on top of this effort. I know how crazy it gets this time of year. Staying ahead of these tasks and organizing your contacts, schedules, marketing, etc. will help provide for solid programs in the future. Keep up the great work.

Regional Efforts

I just wanted to thank the agents and specialists involved in the Regional programs this fall (Small Grains/Amarillo Farm Show) and those coming up this month (Risk Management and Sorghum). Your efforts have been outstanding in planning and implementing outstanding programs. I know we are off to a great start and the information being provided is as important to our clientele as ever. Making a Difference is what we do and you do it better than anyone else. Thanks for your dedication to education!!