

**MISSISSIPPI CROP SITUATION – A TEAM BLOG****Angus L. Catchot****Darrin M. Dodds****Mississippi State University****Mississippi State, MS****Abstract**

Information delivery methods utilized by University Extension Service personnel as well as others in agriculture have changed substantially over the past several years. Historically, Extension Service publications were produced, published in hard copy format, and delivered to clientele through county extension service offices as well as through Extension Service educational programs. However, delivering information in this manner made communication of timely information on events currently occurring extremely difficult. As technology has become more ubiquitous, personnel with the Mississippi State University Extension Service developed an electronic newsletter that dealt with entomological issues in cotton production. The Mississippi Crop Situation Newsletter was delivered to clientele both electronically as well as through hard copy mail outs. As time progressed this newsletter was expanded to address entomological issues in numerous cropping systems. In order to meet the needs of an ever diversifying clientele, the Mississippi Crop Situation newsletter was further expanded to a multi-crop, multi-disciplinary newsletter. Although producing a newsletter in this format was successful, it became apparent the further changes were needed in order to remain a valued source of information. Information is available from numerous sources through smartphones and tablet devices such as iPad's among others. As a result the Mississippi Crop Situation Blog was developed and implemented in 2011.

After implementation of the Mississippi Crop Situation Blog, the next task was determining the impact of this blog. Numerous software tracking packages exist; however, the two utilized for tracking impact of this blog are Wordpress™ and Sitemeter™. Each of these software packages offer the user numerous ways to determine distribution of content contained within the Mississippi Crop Situation blog. Usage statistics can be viewed by day, week, month, or year. In addition, the location that users are utilizing information from can be viewed as well as numerous other parameters such as screen resolution the content was viewed on, search terms used to get to content within the blog, and where the user was referred to the blog from. Examining this information can aid those who maintain a blog understand how users are utilizing their blog and can help tailor content and delivery methods in order to maximize use of the blog. Utilizing information from those who use your blog can help shape the direction the blog goes and ultimately increase the impact that a blog has.