GEORGIA GROWER SURVEY SHOWS BOTH INTEREST AND CONCERN WITH 2,4-D OR DICAMBA IN TOLERANT CROPS

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Abstract

Variety selection has become an increasingly more important challenge facing cotton producers across the U.S. Modern cotton varieties are currently released onto the marketplace very rapidly, due to increase competition among A survey of 574 growers across 42 Georgia counties, 17 consultants, and 43 University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agents was conducted to better understand what approach is needed for a successful adoption of auxin-tolerant cotton. The survey was administered during January and February of 2014 prior to aggressive information delivery by industry or extension regarding these technologies.

Fifty-eight percent of growers reported they were currently managing weeds (primarily Palmer amaranth) effectively as compared to only 5% noted during 2010 with a similar survey. Both consultants and agents were more optimistic suggesting that 75% of their growers were managing weeds effectively. Although each group noted the progress in managing Palmer amaranth, they also noted how an economical solution for the control of glyphosate-resistant Palmer amaranth in cotton continues to elude them.

Eight-four percent of growers believed the ability to use 2,4-D or dicamba in-crop would improve overall weed control on their farm while consultants felt that these tools would be beneficial with only 44% of their growers. Although the vast majority of growers understand the value of using these herbicides in-crop, only 34% of the them reported that they were planning on adopting 2,4-D- or dicamba-based programs. Ten percent of the growers were not planning on adopting 2,4-D or dicamba systems while 56% of the growers suggested that they might adopt these tools but only if they could use them effectively without having off-target movement issues. Nineteen percent of consultants were planning to recommend 2,4-D or dicamba in tolerant crops, 6% were planning on not recommending these herbicides, and 75% felt they would recommend the herbicides but only to a specific portion of their clientele. The portion of their clientele that would receive a positive recommendation included growers with fields not near high value specialty crops and growers that could consistently make precise applications.

When asked about educational trainings, 70% of growers, 94% of consultants, and 100% of agents felt that a two hour in-person training should be required prior to even purchasing these seed technologies. Additionally 82 to 100% of these groups felt that in-person training was more effective than any on-line training approach. When asked who should provide these trainings, 7, 40, and 53% of the growers suggested manufactures, University of Georgia, and University of Georgia or manufactures, respectively.

A final question asked all parties if they believed the Georgia Department of Agriculture should allow commercialization of these auxin-tolerant traits and respective auxin herbicides for use in Georgia. Ninety-two to 95% of the three groups supported their commercialization as long as a strong educational component preceded use.