## PREMIER COTTON EDUCATION: DISEASE/NEMATODES 2014-2016

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## <u>Abstract</u>

Cotton is an important component of the regional economy in the Texas High Plains. Losses due to diseases and nematodes are incurred on an annual basis. The Premier Cotton Educational program was established to identify key program areas that address producer needs in cotton, provide learning outcomes within each program area and establish evaluation instruments to determine the impact of these educational programs. Educational program focus Weed Management, Variety Selection and Pre- plant Decisions, Disease and Nematode areas include; Management, Harvest Preparation and Technologies, Soil and Water Relationships, Economic Risk Management, Fertility, and Insect Management. The results presented herein were obtained from producer responses to surveys at county, district, and regional educational meetings related to only disease and nematode management. Sixteen counties Bailey, Cochran, Collingsworth, Donley, Gaines, Hall, Hansford, Hockley, Hutchinson, Lamb, Lubbock, Mitchell, Parmer, Terry, Wheeler, and Yoakum provided a total of 23 educational face-to-face programs. A total of 978 producers attended these programs and 659 (67%) producers returned evaluation information. These producers represented 901,798 acres and indicated that an estimated average return on knowledge gained averaged \$10.09/acre with an estimated total value of \$9.1 million over the three years. In all, 289 of 388 (74.4%) of eligible producers indicated that they intend to use Texas A&M AgriLife management guidelines for diseases and root-knot nematodes 281 of 390 (72.0%) of eligible producers indicated they intended to use Texas A&M AgriLife cotton variety trial results and disease ratings when considering which varieties to plant. Likewise, 166 of 305 (54.4%) of eligible producers indicated that they intend to use soil sampling for nematodes to determine variety selection in problem fields. Refinements to these programs will continue to be made so that cotton producers in this region can maximize production.