PREMIER COTTON EDUCATION: VARIETIES AND PRE-PLANT CONSIDERATIONS 2014-2016

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<u>**Abstract**</u>

Cotton is an important component of the regional economy in the Texas High Plains. The importance of selecting the best varieties and best management practices prior to planting continues to be very important to producers economically. 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 areas include;   Weed Management, Variety Selection and Pre-plant Decisions, Disease and Nematode 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 cotton varieties and pre-plant considerations. Seventeen counties Bailey, Carson, Cochran, Crosby, Dawson, Donley, Floyd, Gray, Hale, Hall, Hockley, Lubbock, Mitchell, Swisher, Wheeler, and Yoakum provided a total of 30 educational face-to-face programs. A total of 1043 producers attended these programs and 751 (72%) producers returned evaluation information. These producers represented 1,051,394 acres   and indicated that an estimated average return on knowledge gained averaged $10.17/acre with an estimated total value of $10.7 million over the three years. In all, 202 of 275 (73.4%) of eligible producers indicated that more rapidly adopt new herbicide variety technologies based on Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommendations. Likewise, 307 of 430 (71.3%) of eligible producers indicated that they more rapidly adopt new cotton varieties based on Texas A&M AgriLife recommendations. Refinements to these programs will continue to be made so that cotton producers in this region can maximize production.