## TARGET SPOT EPIDEMIC IN THE NORTH DELTA: 2016 OBSERVATIONS AND KEY LEARNINGS

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## <u>Abstract</u>

Target spot (*Corynespora cassiicola*) invaded the north Delta in 2016 like never before. Being proactive in looking for the first signs of disease, applications of Priaxor<sup>®</sup> fungicide began in the first week of bloom to stop disease onset. With many strip plots and split fields of both preventative and reactive applications, we have a good evaluation of what these treatments provided for growers in 2016 when disease pressure continued to develop as the season progressed. Fields were variable in defoliation across the Delta with some as low as 5% defoliated and others as high as 100% defoliated. Some fields that were closely monitored throughout the season resulted in a significantly heavier boll load in treated areas compared to non-treated areas. Factors to consider when considering management of target spot are plant structure, do you have an open or closed canopy, does the field have a history of target spot, and what is the weather outlook. It is likely that every cotton and soybean field in the Mississippi Delta now has some level of target spot inoculum present. When planning for your next crop, don't depend on any one variety to provide you with protection from target spot. Target spot robbed many pounds of lint from the north Delta in 2016. We can't pay the bills when it pushes our yields to less than 1,000 lbs of lint cotton/acre.