



Panhandle Agriculture

Solutions for Your Farm!

Provided By Your County Extension Agents in Northwest Florida

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A Bird In The Hand



by
Bruce Ward
Walton County
Extension
Director



Getting some kind of a price benchmarked in one's mind is not so easy after the roller coaster price ride in the commodity markets of 2008. First week in 2009 a young farmer, over 40 but 20 years my junior, and I were discussing the 13,000 bushels of soybeans he had stored in his bins.

In early July of 2008 the futures market had beans priced at about \$16.40. By harvest time in early November soybeans futures were closer to the \$8.00 mark. The farmer's question to me was "when should I sell"?

That particular day, January soybeans were about \$10.25 I answered with "what price are you holding for"? With soybean prices moving over an \$8.00 range in the last seven months setting a target price appeared difficult for the farmer.

I understood his dilemma. Getting comfortable with a target price isn't so easy when one is looking back to the \$16 price. But there is plenty of information that says that bubble has burst. We now have a new reality.

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As of late all those people who were caught up in rice riots and hunger crisis don't seem to make the news. I'd guess the hungry are still there but for reasons unknown it isn't news.

When just about every economic indicator is down the only thing likely to rise is hot air. And with the election season about past even the supply of hot air is in decline. The new reality says it will be sometime before the uptrend becomes a dominant force.

At this point in time I'm one of those "bird in the hand" type of fellows. In an economic down trend waiting for commodity prices to go up can be a bit long term. But you may not be one of the bird in hand types.

Scout for Poison Weeds Now



*by
Les Harrison
Regional
Specialized
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Technology*

Agent Leon County Extension Office

The spring season provides the occasion to complete some tasks that have been delayed because of more pressing activities. Field, pasture and paddock owners have an excellent opportunity to assess weed problems during the cool season that will likely occur in the next growing season. Two native weeds that are especially easy to

identify are Senna and Crotalaria. Both are important to eliminate from grazing or hay producing ground because each can be toxic to livestock if consumed.

The University of Florida/Leon County Extension Office can help with identification when questions arise. Information is also available on methods to control strategies.

Senna is locally known by several names: coffee weed, coffee senna and sickle pod. The upright plant has oval leaves and bright yellow clusters of blossoms. It frequently appears in cultivated soils, likes full sun and grows to a height of about two feet. The sickle pod variety of Senna gets its name from the distinctive crescent shaped seed pod. The coffee weed variety has a flatter, straighter seed pod.



Photo by Les Harrison

Plants usually occur in groups because the seed are small and easily scattered when the pods are broken open. The occasional lone plant is usually the result of a bird depositing a seed in a location remote from other plants.

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Cattle are susceptible to the effects of these plants as are other animals. Livestock may be exposed by consuming plant material while grazing, through green chopped hay or by grain contaminated with Senna seed. Extreme cases can result in the animal's death.



Photo by: Jim Selph
<http://sfbfp.ifas.ufl.edu/A1-07.html>

Like Senna, Crotalaria grows in sunny, open areas. It may appear suddenly on land where mature trees have been removed. The seed can lay dormant for decades, germinating when environmental conditions are right.

The bright yellow blooms appear on spikes at the top of the plant. The plant's height is similar to Senna and both are annuals.

All parts of the plant are toxic, especially the seed. Horses and cattle are the species usually affected in this area, but goats, sheep and even dogs may be affected.

Livestock is exposed through grazing, hay and contaminated feed. Death may occur in severe cases, but may happen in a few days to a few weeks.

Now is an excellent time to identify infestations that will need treatment. It is better not to disturb plants with seed pods as it may scatter seed over a larger area.

Wildlife Food Plots: Chufa for Turkeys



By
Mike Donahoe
Santa Rosa
County
Extension
Director

*W*ildlife management continues as an area of growing interest on local farms and ranches, and has the potential to generate significant additional income. It is also an opportunity to practice good resource stewardship in the Florida Panhandle. Each spring brings many phone calls from landowners wanting to know what can be planted to enhance the quality of their wild turkey habitat. Chufa is one plant wild turkeys love like most of us love ice cream, and it is easy to grow while providing feed for several months.

Chufa is an African variety of nutsedge, a warm season perennial plant. However, chufa is not as aggressive as the native nutsedges and typically will

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not create problems with succeeding crops. The actual foliage of the plant is not utilized by wildlife, but turkeys, hogs, ducks, and raccoons love the underground tubers the plant produces. Each plant can produce 10 to 75 peanut sized tubers which are high in carbohydrates and protein. The tubers are edible by humans, having a sweet taste similar to almonds or raw peanuts. Turkeys will usually dig the chufas in early fall soon after the leaves turn brown. In Florida, they will dig and eat the nuts from fall throughout the winter and into spring.

Turkeys feeding in a spring chufa patch



Photo by Shep Eubanks

There are several factors to consider if you want to plant chufa. The chufa plant typically grows well anywhere field corn can be grown. Soil test the selected area and lime to a pH between 6.0 – 6.5. A lime application of one ton per acre is not unusual. Recommended planting dates are April 1st through June 30th in the panhandle area. Earlier plantings will produce higher yields, with later plantings typically providing more forage for wildlife later into the spring of the following year.

A June planting is recommended to maximize use by turkeys into the spring. Chufa can be planted later than June 30th some years, but remember it takes the plant approximately 90 days to produce mature tubers. Frost and cold weather stop growth. Plant the seed in a well prepared and fertilized seedbed. The seeding rate for chufa is 40 – 50 pounds per acre broadcast or 30 pounds per acre drilled on a 36 inch row spacing. Strive for a coverage of 3 or 4 seed per square foot. When broadcasting the seed, set your disk to cut about 4 inches deep. This will place the seed to an approximate depth of 2 inches, ideal for chufa.

Normal fertilizer recommendations are 200 pounds of 17-17-17 per acre or equivalent nutrients at planting. When the plants are 6 – 12 inches high (approximately 1 month old), top dress with 100 pounds of nitrogen per acre (for example: 300 pounds of ammonium nitrate) to achieve maximize yields. This may not be as economically possible with high fertilizer prices, but yields will be smaller if fertilizer rates are reduced. For weed control options on chufa plantings consult with your local County Extension Agent for up-to-date recommendations. Small plantings are feasible (less than a quarter-acre) if wild hogs are not present. Best results are obtained with half-acre or larger plantings. Chufa will do a good job of reseeding itself, sometimes over several years. Reseeding a plot can be accomplished by disking the area of the previous planting between April and the end of

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June, then follow fertilizer recommendations for the initial planting. It is frequently advisable to move the chufa plot to a different location after the second crop to avoid soil pest problems. Pull up or disk up a row in the fall after the tops have died back if this is your first chufa plot for your turkeys. This practice will assist the turkeys with identifying the plant if they have never encountered it before.

Chufa discovered by turkeys, note scratching and digging!



Photo by Shep Eubanks

You can expect to find tremendous areas of scratching once they do find it. Quite often the plots will literally look like a mortar or bombing range where the turkeys dig to get the chufas!



Peanut Fungicide Update



*By
John Atkins
Source:
2009
Peanut
Update
University
of Florida*

Peanut growers will have the opportunity to use some new and/or updated tools in 2009 to further their battle against diseases and nematodes.

1) "Day versus Night spraying":

Research began in 2007 and was continued into 2008 (both in small plots and in large, on-farm studies) to assess the benefits and potential consequences of spraying fungicides at night for control of soilborne diseases. Because the peanut leaves "fold up" when it is dark, thus opening the interior of the canopy, it is thought that fungicides applied at such time would have better chance of reaching the crown of the plant. For management of soilborne diseases like white mold and *Rhizoctonia* limb rot, the crown of the plant is targeted for optimum control. Also, it is thought that by spraying fungicides directly into the crown of the plant, the fungicide residues are protected to some degree from sunlight, thus reducing photodegradation and extending the period of efficacy.

Below is a summary of findings from the University of Georgia with regards to spraying at night.

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- Although results were not as dramatic in 2008 as they were in 2007, results were similar in both seasons. Control of white mold can be significantly improved by spraying the peanuts at night, there is no significant reduction in leaf spot control, and yields can be significantly improved with night sprays.



Photo by Judy Ludlow

- Improvement of white mold control is more evident in non-irrigated plots than in irrigated plots when fungicides are applied in darkness, though there is likely to be benefit in both situations.
- Spraying in the early morning hours before dawn tends to offer slightly better results than in spraying in early evening. It is believed that the dew in the early morning further aids in the relocation of the fungicide.
- It is believed that applying fungicides at night will either maintain yields and control of white mold and leaf spot diseases or improve disease control and yields as compared to

daytime applications. There is believed to be little risk to the grower by applying fungicides at night, other than loss of a sound sleep!

- Note: Only fungicides applied for control of soilborne diseases should be considered for application at night. Fungicides applied only for control of leaf spot diseases and rust should continue to be applied during the day.

2) The 2009 "PEANUT Rx" Disease Risk Index is now available and has been thoroughly reviewed and revised as needed by researchers, breeders, and Extension specialists from the University of Georgia, the University of Florida, and Auburn University. The only change deemed necessary was an update of the risk points and varieties that were included in the Index. All other points/categories remained unchanged from 2008.



Photo by Judy Ludlow

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3) "Prescription Fungicide Programs", i.e. specific disease management programs with an increase or decrease in fungicide applications based upon the 2009 "PEANUT Rx", continues to gain support from the agrichemical industry. In 2009, Syngenta Crop Protection (Abound, Bravo WeatherStik, Tilt/Bravo) and Nichino (Artisan, Convoy) will continue to supported prescription programs (4, 5, and 7 applications) for fields determined to be at low, moderate, or high risk according to PEANUT Rx. Prescription programs using fungicides not from Syngenta or Nichino can also be used successfully by growers; however they would not be endorsed or supported by any company.

4) PROLINE 480SC (prothioconazole) from Bayer CropScience finally received a label for use as an in-furrow fungicide on peanut. PROLINE (5.7 fl oz/A) is a promising component of a complete fungicide program to reduce the impact of *Cylindrocladium* black rot (CBR) in a field. With the availability of PROLINE, a good integrated pest management program for growers who wish to manage CBR is to a) practice good crop rotation, b) consider planting a variety with some resistance to CBR, c) use PROLINE, 5.7 fl oz/A in-furrow, at planting, followed by d) a 4-block program of PROVOST or at least use of a fungicide program that offers suppression of CBR (e.g. Folicur, Abound, or Headline).

5) Although they were released in 2007, "newer" fungicides PROVOST (triazole fungicide mixture) and Evito 480SC (strobilurin fungicide) will continue to become more familiar to peanut growers this season as they join Abound, Folicur, Headline, Artisan, and a number of generic tebuconazole products for management of leaf spot and soilborne diseases. Arysta Life Science, maker of EVITO, has also labeled EVITO-T for the 2009 growing season. EVITO-T is a premix of fluoxastrobin (EVITO) and tebuconazole. Research data and rate information on this product is limited at this time, but should become more available as the season progresses.

6) ELAST 400F (dodine) has long been important to pecan growers but has only recently received a label for use in peanut production. In preliminary field trials, ELAST (15 fl oz/A as a stand-alone product and 12.8 fl oz/A tank-mixed with products such as Folicur 3.6F) appears to be an effective fungicide for the control of leaf spot. Like chlorothalonil, ELAST is a protectant fungicide and must be applied before disease occurs. ELAST is in a chemical class different from other peanut fungicides and thus could also be a useful tool in fungicide resistance management.



<http://pnutfestival.com/images>

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7) QUASH (metconazole) is a new fungicide for peanut labeled by Valent. Although QUASH is an effective fungicide for management of leaf spot diseases, it is unlikely that much will be used on peanuts in Georgia.

Tifguard: A Nematode Resistant Peanut Variety

By:

*Dr. Jimmy R. Rich
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The release of the root-knot nematode resistant variety Tifguard in 2008 was a significant advance in managing root-knot nematodes in peanut production. Tifguard is a USDA release and the first root-knot nematode resistant peanut variety adapted to the southeastern US production area. The variety combines major disease resistances, including tomato spotted wilt, and the root-knot nematode resistance gene.

The nematode resistance in Tifguard is conferred by a single dominant gene, and nematode numbers are reduced after growing this variety. The incorporation of this resistance into adapted varieties adds a powerful tool for managing nematodes and will significantly reduce grower costs for nematicide treatment (currently \$60-100/acre). More varieties that contain this resistance will be available in the coming years from peanut breeding programs, including a number of releases from our Florida breeding program. In the meantime, growers who have nematode problems may want to test this new nematode resistance in their fields. Our data from a 2008 field trial using nematode resistant Tifguard and four other non-resistant varieties show a range of reactions of these varieties to the peanut root-knot nematode (Jim Rich, Barry Tillman, Melvin Barber, and Wayne Branch)



AgriVine

Items of Interest, Calendar of Events, CEU Opportunities & More

Tractor & Implement Short Course **July 10 and 11, 2009** **UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center**

Are you a new landowner, new to farming or considering a small production operation? If so, this 2 day course is for you!

July 10 and 11, 2009; you will receive classroom lecture and information on equipment selection, operation, maintenance and safety of tractors and implements. Upon completion, take advantage of the opportunity for "hands on" tractor time, presented by University of Florida/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, John Deere Company and Jackson and Walton County Cooperative Extension. Several equipment companies will be on site to show their tractors and implement lines.

Registration Fee: Day 1 only: \$145.00
Day 1 and Day 2: \$220.0

Participants may register for Day 1 (lecture and demonstration) or Day 1 and Day 2 (including hands on tractor time)

For more information, contact Vicky Morris at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center at 850-875-7115 or vpmorris@ufl.edu.

Please visit

<http://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/events/pdf/Tractor-Jul2009.pdf> to view the agenda.

Okaloosa/Walton Cow/Calf Best Management Practices Kickoff Meeting Announcement

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in cooperation with the Florida Cattlemen's Association, and the University of Florida-IFAS, have scheduled a number of kickoff meetings to formally introduce the recently adopted Cow/Calf Best Management Practices (BMP) manual. This will be the official launch of the industry's BMP program.



The meeting will provide producers with key information on the use of the manual, enrollment process, soil testing, and forage production as it relates to water quality protection. This is a very important program, given

the vast number of acres of rangeland in Florida. Producers are encouraged to make every effort to attend. The North Florida meeting will run from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. (CST). Local producers can attend at the Okaloosa County Extension Office at 5479 Old Bethel Road, Crestview on May 14, 2009.

For further information, contact Bill Bartnick or Clegg Hooks with the Florida Department of Agriculture at 850-617-1700.

USDA Responds to Producer Concerns by Extending Sign-Up Date for DCP & ACRE Programs.

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2009 - Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced today that USDA has extended the sign-up deadline from June 1, to Aug. 14, 2009, for both the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the forthcoming Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. This action extends the sign-up deadline by 10 weeks to give producers ample time to decide whether to participate in ACRE or remain in DCP.

"Extending the DCP and ACRE sign-up deadline will help ensure that America's farmers have enough information and time to determine whether to participate in the ACRE Program. The DCP and ACRE programs play a critical role in the farm safety net and it is vital that we act to support the hard work of the farmers we depend on," Vilsack said.

Sign-up for ACRE is expected to start in late April, with an official sign-up announcement to be made in the coming weeks. Producers can elect ACRE at their FSA county office after the sign-up period commences. The original June 1 deadline may have forced producers to rush their decision, which is why this extension gives producers more time to make an informed decision about staying with DCP for 2009 or participating in ACRE for crop year 2009 and beyond through 2012.

The ACRE program, authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill, provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price. ACRE payments are made when both state and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments, receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. The decision to elect ACRE binds the farm to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Act.

For more information about ACRE, DCP and other price support programs, please visit your FSA county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

AgroClimate Works for You!

What is AgroClimate?

"AgroClimate is an interactive website with climate, agriculture, and forestry information that allows users to assess resource management options with respect to their probable outcomes under forecast climate conditions. AgroClimate uses crop simulation models along with historic and forecast climate data to allow decision makers to compare changes in probable outcomes under different climate conditions."

AgroClimate has started providing monthly climate summaries for the States of Florida, Georgia and North Carolina. Summaries for the previous month will be posted on AgroClimate at

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Items of Interest, Calendar of Events, CEU Opportunities & More

the end of first week of each month. You can find them by clicking on "Monthly Climate Summary" on the left side menu of www.AgroClimate.org or: Florida:

<http://agroclimate.org/climateSummary/florida.php>

Georgia:

<http://agroclimate.org/climateSummary/georgia.php>

Peanut Nematicide: NemOut

By

Dr. Jimmy Rich

Nematology Specialist

North Florida REC, Quincy

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Over the past three years, I have tested a biological nematicide, NemOut, to control root-knot nematodes in peanut. The material has provided relatively consistent yield increases in small plot trials, similar to those of the standard Temik treatment. Additionally, small plot results of Bob Kemerait in Georgia have mirrored those in Florida. The active ingredient of NemOut is a spore of the fungus *Paecilomyces lilacinus*. It is quite safe to use and has been fully registered by the EPA. I would now like to obtain farmer generated data or observations to verify and extend my small plot data. While the product can be used on all peanut production in Florida, I would think it may be most useful for growers where Temik is prohibited and on green peanuts. If you are a grower interested in helping us collect field generated data and observations, please contact me (850-

875-7130), or your local County Extension Agent. Thank you.

The University of Florida IFAS Extension Needs You!

The *University* of Florida IFAS Extension works towards agricultural, environmental, and economic sustainability in our rapidly growing state and *communities*.

We accomplish this through *research-based* educational programs, publications, and opportunities provided to you *locally*.

Please consider donating to the UF IFAS County Extension office in your county. Your monetary gift is greatly appreciated, and will be used to *continue* our efforts at providing information and education you want and need.

To find out *more* about making donations and endowments to University of Florida IFAS Extension, please *contact* your County Extension Agents listed below, or Joe Mandernach, IFAS Development Office, at 352-392-5457, jmandern@ufl.edu.

Thank You!



NW District Extension Offices

Contact us for More Information if You Have Any Questions



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New Florida Cow/Calf Best Management Practices Introduction



Thursday, May 14, 2009
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Okaloosa County
Extension Office
(Walthall Ag Center)
5479 Old Bethel Road
Crestview, Florida 32536

Video Conference from Jackson County

Program Content:

Receive BMP Manual and Learn How To Use
Enrollment Process
Soil Testing to Protect Water Quality
Forage Production to Protect Water Quality

Call 689-5850 for more information.



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In Northwest Florida*

