



2019 MSU EXTENSION FIELD CROP TEAM—PROVIDING TIMELY AND RELEVANT INFORMATION IN CHALLENGING TIMES

15,537

field crop producers and agribusiness agronomists were reached through a wide array of educational methods.

2,654

field crop producers improved their agricultural knowledge and farm management skills by participating in Michigan State University (MSU) Extension programs.

PRIORITY

A R E A S

The following priority areas were identified by regional advisory groups composed of producers, agribusinesses, Michigan Farm Bureau and commodity groups:

- Cropping systems agronomy
- Nutrient management and soil health
- Farm profitability
- Pesticide resistance and integrated pest management
- Government regulation and policy

For additional information regarding field crop educational programs, research projects and educational materials, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/.

IMPACTS

The MSU Extension Field Crops Team has a long history of providing evidence-based knowledge to address the needs of field crop producers across Michigan. Thirteen faculty specialists and 15 county-based educators are currently assigned to field crops Extension in Michigan. Faculty specialists are experts in their fields of study, conducting research and sharing recommendations based on their findings with growers. Field educators work side by side with producers, agribusinesses and agencies, delivering educational programming on either a regional or statewide basis. Exit surveys conducted at educational programs revealed the following combined impacts:



262,558

acres were projected to be impacted by the new information learned.



\$15.23

per acre was the projected additional income generated by implementing the new information.



\$4,000,000

is the total projected financial impact in 2020 alone.



VIRTUAL BREAKFAST

The MSU Extension Field Crops Team spearheaded a special program in 2019 – The Virtual Breakfast series (https://www.canr.msu.edu/field_crops/virtual-breakfast/). The series evolved from the old team-based Crop Advisory Team (CAT) Alert conference calls, held by the Integrated Pest Management Program each week during the field season. For two decades, the CAT Alert calls were an efficient and highly successful way to share information among campus and field educators. The idea of the Virtual Breakfast was to open the weekly calls to the public, using newer phone and video technology. The Virtual Breakfast was a webinar held on Thursday mornings during the growing season. The half-hour program featured one of our campus-based specialists who presented a timely 12-minute topic to the webinar viewers, followed by a question-and-answer period. The second half of the program included our agricultural climatologist, giving a weather forecast for the week, and beyond.

All totaled, 921 participants, or an average of 48.5 per week, watched the live presentation over the 19 weeks of the program. An additional 1,673 participants, or an average of 88.1 per week, watched the archived webinar at a later time on YouTube. When Facebook reaches, Spotify and iTunes podcasts are added in, the total reach of this program was 11,707, or 616.2 total reaches per week.

921

producers and agronomists participated in the live sessions.

1,673

producers and agronomists viewed the YouTube recordings.

ADDRESSING DELAYED PLANTING CHALLENGES

The frequent and sometimes heavy rains occurring in spring 2019 led to unprecedented planting delays. In fact, nearly 500,000 acres of corn and 350,000 acres of soybeans were never planted. The field crops team developed, compiled and distributed information to help producers reduce the adverse effects of the delayed and prevented planting situation. Topics included: adjusting planting practices for planting delays; understanding prevent plant insurance coverage and decisions; managing

prevent plant acres; and understanding recommendations for harvesting, handling and storing grain with higher than normal moisture contents. The information was distributed through various educational methods.

A delayed planting team was created to lead MSU Extension’s response. The team created and promoted a new delayed planting resource site online (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/agriculture/delayed-planting-resources/>). The site received nearly 4,400 pageviews since its inception. One of the Virtual Breakfast sessions was dedicated to information on adjusting soybean planting practices when planting late and another provided information for making prevent plant insurance decisions. These two sessions reached more than 1,600 producers and agronomists. Five face-to-face educational programs were planned, promoted and conducted in cooperation with USDA–Farm Service Agency, Michigan Farm Bureau, GreenStone Farm Credit Services and Zeeland Farm Services. More than 440 producers participated in these programs. In addition, one of the educational sessions at the MSU Agriculture Innovation Day focused on adjusting corn planting practices when planting is delayed. Potential harvest challenges were identified and addressed through articles and handouts distributed at four field days.

2019 SOYBEAN EDUCATION AND ON-FARM RESEARCH PROGRAM

723 producers and agronomists participated in nine educational programs focused on soybean production in 2019. Follow-up evaluations were mailed out to program participants at the end of the 2019 harvest season to measure and document the actual educational and financial impacts of the programs. A summary of the survey results follows:

136

producers earned additional income by implementing the new information they learned in 2019.

\$9.50

per acre in additional earnings was generated on 62,278 acres.

\$594,282

is the reported actual total financial impact of the programs in 2019 alone.



MSU Extension and the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee cooperated to plan, conduct and summarize 47 on-farm trials in 2019. Ten projects, based on input from more than 340 producers and agronomists, were evaluated in the trials. The research results were summarized in a 32-page research report (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan-soybean-on-farm-research-report>) and mailed directly to more than 11,000 soybean producers.

“ Keep up the good work on the report. It is the most credible data I think I study all year long. ”

- *Producer reacting to the Soybean On-Farm Research Program*



Near-capacity attendance at the White Mold Management in Dry Beans and Soybeans Program in Richville, Michigan, on March 6, 2019.

“ I wanted to send you some positive feedback on the soybean harvest day you put together. Really learned a lot and set us up with some great lessons learned going into harvest. ”

- *Soybean harvest equipment field day participant*

91%

of the follow-up evaluation respondents learned new information by participating in the programs.

76%

of the follow-up evaluation respondents implemented the new information they learned on their farms in 2020.

PEST AND CROP MANAGEMENT UPDATE

MSU Extension provided information and resources to help field crop producers address their pest and crop management challenges using a variety of educational methods. Seven face-to-face educational meetings for producers and agribusiness agronomists were conducted across the state. One of these designed specifically for agribusiness agronomists was attended by 352 producers and agronomists. Two of the meetings focused on crop management topics and reached 87 producers and agronomists. Four programs addressed pest management issues reaching 201 producers and agronomists (two programs were cancelled due to winter storms). MSU specialists also presented their latest crop and pest management recommendations in a seven-session webinar series reaching 294 producers and agronomists. A total of 933 producers and agronomists participated in the pest and crop meetings and the webinar series. 284 of the participants planned to make changes on 296,747 acres. The intended changes have been valued at an average \$10.49 per acre producing a total projected financial impact of \$3,114,525 from these programs.

296,747

acres on which program participants planned to make changes.

\$3,114,525

total projected financial impact of the 2019 pest and crop management programs.



HELPING CORN PRODUCERS MANAGE TAR SPOT

MSU Extension was instrumental in helping producers manage a new and serious disease in corn, tar spot. A tar spot field day attended by 75 industry personnel was conducted in Allegan County. In addition to the MSU Extension scheduled pest and crop management meetings, virtual breakfasts and webinars, Martin Chilvers, MSU field crop pathologist, gave many extra tar spot presentations and field days at the request of various industry groups. Chilvers presented more than 50 extension talks to an estimated 3,000 total participants, not including those reached through webinar, radio and social media broadcasts. In addition, MSU Extension received many calls and emails during the field season given all the questions that tar spot has brought. Chilvers also developed and provided PowerPoint presentation resources and engaged stakeholders through social media, particularly at critical times during tar spot disease onset, and provided a one-stop shop for mapping disease occurrence at the county level.



Tar Spot on corn



Martin Chilvers, MSU field crop pathologist, speaking to producers and agronomists at the 2019 Tar Spot field Day.

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