

## **PCG Annual Meeting – Friday, April 5**

9 a.m. • Lubbock Memorial Civic Center

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn

Dr. Gary Adams, NCC • Berrye Worsham, Cotton Inc.

Keynote Speaker: Tamar Haspel

Sponsored by Farmers Cooperative Compress

More info: <http://plainscotton.org>

## **Planter Maintenance Clinic Set for March 29**

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 By Kay Ledbetter, AgriLife TODAY

At this time of the year, producers spend significant time selecting corn hybrids and cotton varieties as well as herbicide programs. But another important annual consideration is planter maintenance, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist said.

“When we talk about planter maintenance, it’s important to realize we are talking more than just about greasing chains,” said Dr. Jourdan Bell, AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo. “We are talking about stand establishment and how it is affected by the mechanics of the planter, including down pressure, row cleaners, coulters, gauge wheels, opening discs and other mechanical components.”

Proper seed placement can affect the environment of the seed in the planting furrow as well as seedling vigor, she said.

“Failure to set a planter properly can cause a yield loss in corn and cotton,” she said. “Poor seed placement can cause seedlings to quickly die after germination or have poor root establishment. Generally, the variety or hybrid is blamed for yield drag, but in fact, it could be affected by the planter.”

Bell said this year she and Dr. Murilo Maeda, AgriLife Extension cotton specialist, Lubbock, are doing something new to address the growing issues with planters and planting by bringing in a private consultant, Missy Bauer with B&M Crop Consulting in Coldwater, Michigan, to discuss the various maintenance and mechanical areas that can impact crop yields.

The Texas High Plains Planter Clinic will be from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. March 29 at the Castro County Expo Center, 403 SE 4th St., Dimmitt. There will be hands-on demonstrations. The program is free, and lunch will be provided. Sponsors include Texas Corn Producers Board, Plains Cotton Growers, Channel Seed, BASF, PhytoGen Cottonseed and Pioneer Brand Seeds.

Joining Bell and Maeda are Nikolas Clarkson, AgriLife Extension agronomy agent, Hale, Castro and Lamb counties; and John David Gonzales, AgriLife Extension integrated pest management agent, Bailey, Castro and Parmer counties.

Maeda said with the rising cost of cotton seed, many producers are interested in reducing planting populations, however, unfavorable weather conditions and poor seed placement due to improper planter setting often lead to “skippy” stands.

“While cotton has an outstanding ability to compensate for the extra space between plants, that tends to delay maturity and ultimately impact fiber quality and crop yield, especially in areas north of Lubbock where season length may become limiting,” he said.

During lunch, Maeda will discuss considerations for cotton planting and Bell will discuss corn planting considerations.

Bell said while the only clinic this year is planned in Castro County, the training is needed by and intended for producers across the High Plains.

She explained down pressure, for instance, is important to help maintain a constant seeding depth. Adjustments could need to be made for individual fields according to soil texture. If the pressure is too much, the seeds could be too deep, and the seedling may not have sufficient energy to break the soil surface.

Worn disc openers could result in soil backfilling into the seed furrow, which leads to incorrect seeding depth as well as poor seed-to-soil contact. Under dry West Texas conditions, Maeda said, shallow seeds either do not germinate or germinate and die if moisture is not available to maintain growth.

Very low stands can result in yield losses or plants that become very growthy he said. This often causes the cotton strippers to have to slow down, reducing harvest efficiency.

For corn, Bell said, uniform stand establishment is critical because each plant only produces one ear, so for every lost or delayed plant, yield potential drops.

Producers who are unable to attend this clinic can contact Bell at 806-677-5600, [Jourdan.bell@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Jourdan.bell@ag.tamu.edu), or Maeda at 806-746-6101, [mmaeda@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mmaeda@ag.tamu.edu), for more information on planter maintenance and set up.

## **Upcoming Area Ag Days, Auxin Trainings**

**March 18** – Auxin Training, 9 a.m., Crosby County AgriLife Extension Office, **Crosbyton**

**March 18** – Parmer County Ag Day, 9 a.m., XIT Building, **Bovina**. More info: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Parmer County, (806) 251-5120.

**March 19** – Row Crop and IPM Conference, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., followed by Auxin Training, Ollie Liner Center, **Plainview**. More info: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Hale County, (806) 291-5267.

**March 19** – Auxin Trainings, 9 a.m., Attebury Grain, **Tulia**; and also at 3:30 p.m., Ollie Liner Center, **Plainview**

**March 20** – Auxin Training, 3:00 p.m., Wolf Creek Heritage Museum, **Lipscomb**

**March 21** – Auxin Training, Dawson County AgriLife Extension Office, **Lamesa**; and also at 10 a.m., Deaf Smith County AgriLife Extension Office, **Hereford**

**March 22** – Auxin Training, 10 a.m., Castro County AgriLife Extension Office, 205 N. Broadway, **Dimmitt**

To see a complete list of upcoming conferences and auxin trainings, visit <http://www.plainscotton.org/agconferences.html>.