



GEORGIA
FARM *A*SYST

FARM ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

COTTON IPM

Paul Guillebeau, IPM/Pesticide Coordinator
Gretchen Van De Mark, Entomology Department



Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Athens

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

Why Should I Be Concerned?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) incorporates a variety of cultural, biological, and chemical methods to efficiently manage a cropping system while lowering dependence on chemicals. IPM, through its multi-tactical approach, may 1) help diminish pest *resistance* to pesticides, 2) reduce chemical costs, 3) limit personal exposure to chemicals (mixing, spraying, etc.) and 4) lower the environmental impact of your crop.

Pesticides, though integral to today's agriculture, have come under increasing scrutiny in the past few years. By utilizing a variety of pest management tactics, pesticides used remain effective because of reduced chances of pest *resistance* to chemicals. Also, with the diminished chemical dependence of IPM, these same chemicals are less likely to be taken off the market due to the perceived negative environmental impacts of pesticides.

Integrated Pest Management takes an individualized approach to each farming system or crop to maximize pest management and profit. It serves the dual purpose of being more environmentally sound while maintaining profitability by striving to keep pest populations below economically damaging levels. IPM is an ever increasing trend in agriculture and many state and governmental agencies are lending research and financial support to increase adoption of this method of farming.

How Does This Assessment Help Protect Drinking Water and the Environment?

- This assessment allows you to measure the level of IPM on your farm.
- The assessment asks a series of questions about your use of pesticides and the cultural and biological pest management practice used on your cotton crop.
- The assessment evaluation uses your answers (rankings) to identify practices that use IPM and practices that might be modified to help reduce environmental impact and limit pest *resistance* to pesticides.
- The *Integrated Pest Management* facts (pg. 11-14) give an overview of IPM strategies that can be applied to your farm. If applied, they can help reduce environmental impact and pest *resistance* influenced by your use of pesticides and cultural and biological pest management practices.
- You are encouraged to complete the entire document and use all six areas when completing the assessment.
- You are encouraged to develop an action plan based on your needs as identified by the assessment. The *Integrated Pest Management* facts, reference and publication lists can provide alternatives to current practices.
- Farm *A*Syst is a voluntary program.
- The assessment should be conducted by you for your use. A professional from the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service can provide assistance in completing the assessment.

* Words found in italics are defined in the glossary.

ASSESSMENT:

Assessing Your Pesticide Use and Cultural and Biological Pest Management Practices.

For each category or statement listed on the left, read across to the right and circle the statement that best describes conditions on your farm. If a category does not apply, for example, it asks about early season insect damage and you don't have high risk for damage, then simply skip the question. Once you have decided on the most appropriate answer, look above the description to find your rank (4, 3, 2 or 1) and enter that number in the "RANK" column. The entire assessment should take less than 45 minutes. A glossary is on page 16 to clarify words found in italics throughout this assessment.

COTTON IPM					
	HIGH IPM (rank 4)	MOD IPM (rank 3)	LOW IPM (rank 2)	NO IPM (rank 1)	RANK
INSECT MANAGEMENT					
Cotton scouting techniques:	Fields are systematically checked and sampled from side to side, front to back and along the edges, with notes taken on beneficial insects, weed and disease problems, and growth and development of the crop.	Fields are systematically checked and sampled.	Fields are only generally observed while performing routine tasks in the field.	Fields are not scouted.	
Cotton fields are scouted for insect pests:	Twice per week from pin head square to cut out and once per week the rest of the season.	Twice per week from pin head square to cut out and less than once per week the rest of the season.	About once per week throughout the season for insect pests.	Never, or are scouted less than once per week.	
Spraying for insect pests is based on scouting reports for both beneficials and pests:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Hotlines, cotton newsletters, and other current information are used to influence pest management decisions:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Beneficial insects and spiders, along with their life stages, are taken into account when choosing an insecticide:	Always, and the pest threshold for spraying is raised if they are present.	Always, but the pest threshold for spraying may not be raised.	Sometimes, but the pest threshold for spraying is not usually raised.	Never.	

COTTON IPM

	HIGH IPM (rank 4)	MOD IPM (rank 3)	LOW IPM (rank 2)	NO IPM (rank 1)	RANK
Insecticides are rotated within the growing season with respect to insecticide class and mode of action (If available):	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
To prevent or minimize early season insect damage such as thrips, in areas where there is high risk:	An at planting systemic preventive insecticide is used and fields are scouted until pin-head square stage.	An at planting systemic preventive insecticide is used.	Only foliar sprays are relied on.	No early season preventive use of insecticides is made.	
When considering whether to spray for postseedling insects, factors such as the most recent scouting report, weather, and economic ("action") thresholds are used:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Destruction of cotton stalks:	Completed soon after harvest and before first frost.	Completed soon after harvest.	Completed later after harvest but before February 1st.	<i>Cotton stalks are not destroyed before February 1st.**</i>	

Number of Areas Ranked _____
 (Number of insect management questions answered,
 if all answered, should total 9.)

Ranking Total _____
 (Sum of all numbers in the "RANK" Column)

COTTON IPM

	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
WEED MANAGEMENT					
To select the most effective herbicides and rotation crops, field surveys of weed populations:	Are done for each field and maps and notes are recorded.	Are done for each field and notes are recorded.	Are done for each field and only mental notes and maps are made.	Are not done.	
Carry over, or residual effects, or a herbicide are considered with respect to other crops likely to be planted in the same field:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Herbicides are rotated within the growing season with respect to herbicide class and mode of action (if available):	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Pre-emergence herbicides are applied by banding:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
When weed problems vary significantly in a crop, weed control is tailored for each crop:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never, despite weed variance in the crop.	
When weed problems vary significantly in a field, weed control is tailored for each crop:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never, despite weed variance in the field.	
Row middle weed control is achieved by banded spraying or cultivation.	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	

COTTON IPM					
	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
To control the spread of weed seeds, rhizomes, and tubers, equipment is cleaned between fields and weedier fields are harvested after less weedy fields:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Turn rows are cleaned prior to harvest:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	

Number of Areas Ranked _____

(Number of weed management questions answered, if all answered, should total 9.)

Ranking Total _____

(Sum of all numbers in the "RANK" Column)

COTTON IPM					
	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
DISEASE AND NEMATODE MANAGEMENT					
Soil samples for parasitic nematodes are taken for most of your cotton fields:	From August until mid to late November (before the first frost).	From August until mid to late November (before the first frost) every other year.	From late November (or after the first frost) through July.	Never.	
Number of soil samples taken to test for parasitic nematodes:	One soil sample for every 25 or fewer acres.	One soil sample for every 26-60 acres.	One soil sample for every 61-100 acres.	One soil sample for every 100 or more acres or no samples.	
Nematode control with non-host rotation crops:	Cotton usually grown every third year or in a longer rotation.	Cotton usually grown every other year.	A non-host crop grown about every third or fourth year.	Cotton rarely or never rotated to a non-host crop.	
Nematode and disease management programs are based on:	Observations of crop growth, root symptoms and soil samples.	Observations of crop growth and root symptoms.	Observations of crop growth.	No observations.	

COTTON IPM

	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
Cotton is planted:	When the four inch soil temperature reaches 65°F for three days and warming conditions are projected over the next several days. Care is taken to plant seeds to the appropriate depth for weather conditions.	When the four inch soil temperature reaches 65°F for three days and warming conditions are projected over the next several days.	In less than optimal conditions (too damp or cool).	Too early (weather is too damp and cool) or too late in the season (increases exposure to detrimental pests.)	
The Seedling Point System, which includes information about soil moisture, temperature, and field history, is used to help make fungicide application decisions:	Always.	Usually.	Not usually.	Never.	
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT					
Nutrient applications are tailored within your cotton crop:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	
Most fields are sampled for standard or routine soil nutrient tests:	Every year during late summer or fall.	About every two years during late summer or fall.	Less often than every two years during the late summer or fall, or fields are tested more frequently but during winter, spring, early summer or mid summer.	Never.	
To decide most judicious applications of nitrogen and other nutrients, petiole and/or tissue sampling:	Is done starting the week before first bloom and then once per week. Factors such as field history, soil type, irrigation management and reasonable yield are also taken into account.	Is done less than once per week, but factors such as field history, soil type, irrigation management and reasonable yield are taken into account.	Is not done, but factors such as field history, soil type, irrigation management and reasonable yield are taken into account.	Is not done. Nitrogen is applied according to fixed rates.	

COTTON IPM

	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
CULTURAL AND SOIL QUALITY MANAGEMENT					
Spray pattern and application rates of applicators are calibrated under field conditions at the beginning of each season, and needed adjustments are made:	Weekly.	Monthly.	Once per season.	Never, and/or applications are not calibrated at the beginning of each season.	
Appropriate strainers and nozzles are used based on what is being applied and are cleaned and replaced in a timely manner:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Never.	
To control drift, anti-drift nozzles, spray boom height and weather conditions are taken into consideration:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Never.	
Cotton variety selection is based on such factors as genetic resistance to fungal, viral and insect pests (e.g. Bt cotton) and local data and experience:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Never. Cotton variety is selected based only on yield potential.	
Production practices are based on local data and experience:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Never.	
Crop rotation:	Cotton is usually grown every third year or in a longer rotation.	Cotton is usually grown every other year.	A non-host crop is grown about every third or fourth year.	Cotton is rarely or never rotated to a non-host crop.	

COTTON IPM

	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
<p>How many of the following methods are carried out on most of your fields?</p> <p>1) Strip-till or conservation till</p> <p>2) Properly maintained terraces</p> <p>3) Properly maintained filter strips or grass waterways on down slope edges of fields</p> <p>4) Fall cover crop</p>	3-4	2	1	0	
<p>To minimize or reduce formation of compacted soil layers ("hard pans") how many of the following methods are used?</p> <p>1) Subsoiling</p> <p>2) The same traffic lane is used for each operation</p> <p>3) Operations are combined or avoided when possible</p> <p>4) Machinery is not operated in wet fields</p>	3-4	2	1	0	

COTTON IPM

	LOW RISK (rank 4)	LOW-MOD RISK (rank 3)	MOD-HIGH RISK (rank 2)	HIGH RISK (rank 1)	RANK
Management strategies (insect, weed, etc.) are based on the most current information from Extension or other reputable sources:	Always.	Usually.	Sometimes.	Not usually or never.	

TOTAL Number of Areas Ranked _____
 (Number of questions answered, if all answered, should total 36.)

Ranking Total _____
 (Sum of all numbers in the "RANK" Column)

NOTES:

ASSESSMENT EVALUATION:

What Do I Do With These Rankings?

STEP 1: Identify Areas That Have Been Determined to be low and no *IPM*

High *IPM* practices (4s) are ideal and should be your goal. Moderate *IPM* practices (3s) provide reasonable reduction in environmental impact and pest *resistance to pesticides*. Low *IPM* practices (2s) provide inadequate reduction in many circumstances. No *IPM* practices (1s) are inadequate and pose a high risk for causing environmental, health, economic, or regulatory problems, plus increasing the threat of *pest resistance*.

No *IPM* practices, rankings of “1”, require immediate attention. Some may only require little effort to correct, while others entail major and/or costly changes and may require planning or prioritizing before you take action. All activities identified as “no *IPM*” or “1s” should be listed in the Action Plan (page 15). Rankings of “2” should be examined in greater detail to determine the exact level of *IPM* and attention given accordingly.

STEP 2: Determine Your *IPM* Rankings

The *IPM* Rankings provides a general idea of how your cotton *IPM* selection and use might be affecting your ground and surface water, soil and air quality and *resistance* management. Use the results determined from the questionnaire portion of this assessment and the following formulas to find your *IPM* rankings.

$$\text{INSECT MANAGEMENT TOTAL (Page 3)} \div \text{NUMBER OF AREAS RANKED} = \text{INSECT } IPM \text{ RANKING}$$

$$\text{WEED MANAGEMENT TOTAL (Page 3)} \div \text{NUMBER OF AREAS RANKED} = \text{WEED } IPM \text{ RANKING}$$

$$\text{OVERALL RANKING TOTAL (Page 3)} \div \text{TOTAL NUMBER OF AREAS RANKED} = \text{OVERALL } IPM \text{ RANKING}$$

<i>IPM</i> RANKING	LEVEL OF RISK
3.6 to 4	High <i>IPM</i>
2.6 to 3.5	Moderate to High <i>IPM</i>
1.6 to 2.5	Low to Moderate <i>IPM</i>
1.0 to 1.5	No to Low <i>IPM</i>

These rankings give you an idea of how your cotton *IPM* selection and use might be affecting your crop’s environmental impact and pest *resistance to pesticides*. The rankings should serve only as a very general guide, not as a precise diagnosis, since it represents the average of many individual rankings with no consideration given to the relative importance of each ranking. Your goal should be to continue improving the average overall ranking by improving areas ranked 1 and 2.

STEP 3: Read the *IPM* Facts Section (pages 11-14) for Suggestions on Improving Your Cotton *IPM*

While reading, think how you could modify your practices to address some of your low and no *IPM* areas. If you have any questions that are not addressed in the *IPM* Facts portion of this assessment, consult the references in the back of this publication or contact your county Extension agent for more information. Use this information to develop your action plan.

IPM FACTS:

Reducing Environmental Risk and Pest Resistance to Pesticides

Six Areas of *Integrated Pest Management* will be discussed:

- Insect Management
- Weed Management
- Disease and Nematode Management
- Nutrient and Soil Quality Management
- Cultural Management
- Education

INSECT MANAGEMENT

Scouting

Scouting is an integral part of cotton insect management. Spraying insecticides based primarily on thresholds can reduce the amount, expense, time and the environmental and health risks of chemical applications. In addition, minimizing insecticide sprays may reduce input costs and lower the chance of pest *resistance* development.

Scouting a cotton crop throughout the entire growing season is important. It is most vital, however, from pinhead square to *cut out*. Bollworms and tobacco budworms can cause significant damage during this time. Delay in spraying can make further control even more difficult. A *scouting* rate of twice per week throughout this period is highly recommended. *Scouting* once per week before and after this point should be sufficient to monitor for potentially damaging pest populations.

To be most effective, *scouting* should be done according to Extension guidelines set out in the **Cotton Scout Handbook**. The guidelines include appropriate field *scouting* patterns, *scouting* frequency, number of samples to be taken, growth stage of crop and beneficial insect information. The procedures for *scouting* also include square retention counts, terminal counts for insects (beneficials, and pests) and damaged square counts. To avoid unnecessary sprays, your insecticide applications should be based on the most recent *scouting* reports and on *economic* (“*action*”) *thresholds*.

Using the insect pest history of the field is not a useful way to making spray decisions. The pest populations in a field can change dramatically from year to year. Hotlines, cotton newsletters and other current information are valuable resources for helping make insect management decisions.

Choosing an Insecticide

Beneficial insects and spiders and their respective life stages should be taken into consideration when choosing an insecticide. These organisms are helpful to the farmer since they attack and reduce populations of crop damaging insect pests. When beneficials are present, less toxic chemicals reduce the range of non-targets affected. They may be either more selective or generally less toxic while maintaining an acceptable level of pest management. Weigh the short and long term effects of selective versus non-selective insecticides on target and non-target insects and spiders.

Your Extension Agent or Extension IPM Specialist can provide information about the effects of various insecticides on non-target insects and spiders. A publication called **Recognizing the Good Bugs in Cotton** from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service is a good, pocket-sized reference for identifying beneficial insects and the pests they prey on.

In addition to choosing pesticides that are less toxic to beneficial species, raising spray thresholds when these natural enemies are present can significantly improve your IPM rating. In many circumstances, tolerating low levels of some pests may be more profitable than spraying costly insecticides.

Practice Insect Resistance Management (IRM) when selecting and applying insecticides. To slow or prevent pest *resistance* to chemicals, insecticides should be rotated during the season with respect to mode of action and chemical class. If feasible, spot treatments are suggested for patchy outbreaks such as those that often occur with spider mites.

Preventative Insecticide Use

While preventative use of insecticides is not typically encouraged in an IPM program, early season insect control against thrips, where there is high risk, is almost essential to ensuring a strong, healthy stand of cotton. Economically significant losses could be expected in most years in Georgia if this is not done. A vigorous initial stand is one of the most important factors in a cotton IPM system. The cotton is more competitive with weeds for resources and less susceptible to diseases and insect damage.

Application of insecticides at planting, which protects the emerging seedling, can decrease the need for post-emergence foliar insecticide and herbicide sprays. At plant treatments tend to have less impact on beneficial species than post-emergence sprays. In addition, they are more persistent and tend to produce higher yields. Once the seedlings have emerged, considerations for spraying should include the most recent *scouting* report, weather and *economic* (“*action*”) *thresholds*.

Stalk Destruction

Destroy cotton stalks soon after harvest to eliminate an overwintering food source and refuge for nematodes and insects, particularly boll weevils. In compliance with Georgia Department of Agriculture regulations, and enforced by the Boll Weevil Foundation, this should be completed by February 1st. Tilling soon after harvest to destroy cotton roots may limit nematode population growth in the fall, particularly root-knot nematodes (RKN). The smaller the stalk pieces are cut up, the fewer refuges the insects and nematodes have for overwintering.

WEED MANAGEMENT

Weed History

Knowing the weed history of your cotton fields and having clearly drawn out “weed maps” or written descriptions can be of assistance when determining pre-emergence herbicide treatments. It helps locate trouble spots within a field. Many

farmers rely on memory or mental notes. However, the larger the area farmed, the less reliable this technique becomes.

Weed Resistance Management

Resistance management is a well-known term in regard to insect pests. While Georgia farmers typically have not experienced significant weed *resistance* to herbicides, the potential exists for it to occur in the future. It is recommended that pesticides in the same class or with similar modes of action are not sprayed more than once in the same field during a two-year period if possible. This ensures that currently available herbicides remain effective for the longest amount of time.

Banding herbicide applications and tailoring herbicide treatments within a crop and/or field for areas of patchy weed problems not only reduces the threat of *resistance*, it cuts down on herbicide usage. This can result in less financial output for chemical control and lowered personal exposure. Early recognition and action against potential *resistance* development ensures that future outbreaks of such events may be avoided or at least significantly reduced.

Herbicide Carry Over or Residual Activity

If you rotate your cotton crop with other crops, it is important to note the *carry over* potential of certain herbicides. *Carry over* or residual activity of an herbicide can cause mild to severe damage to subsequent crops. Weakened crops are more susceptible to disease, insect damage and adverse weather. Common *carry over* problems are associated with such herbicides as Cadre, Pursuit, Command Zorial, and Staple. Read individual herbicide labels carefully to determine the possibility of *carry over* or residual activity.

Cultural Weed Management

Using basic sanitation and cultivation techniques reduces the amount of viable weed seeds, rhizomes and tubers present in a field. Cleaning equipment between fields, cleaning turn rows prior to harvest and harvesting weedier fields after fields

with fewer weeds are simple and inexpensive ways to reduce the spread of undesirable vegetation. Row middle weed control is best achieved by either banded spraying or cultivation, depending on your soil type and condition.

DISEASE AND NEMATODE MANAGEMENT

Nematode Sampling and Control

Nematodes cause damage to a cotton crop, especially in conjunction with fungal diseases such as Fusarium. When nematode populations are well controlled, damage from disease is greatly reduced. Soil sampling for plant parasitic nematodes, taken according to techniques set out by your County Extension Agent, is recommended during the fall of the year before the first frost. A sampling rate of about one sample for every 25 or fewer acres can help you identify nematode problems early to make control easier.

Avoid moving soil from one field to the next via farm equipment, implements and vehicles to reduce the likelihood of contaminating “nematode-free” fields. Preventing the movement of nematodes into a field is much easier and less expensive than controlling already established populations. Rotating cotton to a non-host is another nematode management practice. Planting cotton only every third year or in a longer rotation significantly reduces populations of many parasitic nematodes.

Your nematode management program should be based on observations of crop growth, root symptoms and soil samples. Cotton should not be stunted, roots should be free of brown, water-soaked streaking and soil samples should be checked for types of nematodes and *threshold* levels before treating your crop with nematocides.

Timely Crop Development

One of the best ways to protect your cotton from nematodes and disease is to ensure conditions for timely crop development. Begin by planting seeds in optimum conditions for growth. The soil should be neither too dry nor too wet. Raised beds often help the soil warm up more quickly and

promote drainage. Prime planting conditions are: moist, but not wet, 4-inch soil temperatures of 65 degrees Fahrenheit for three days, and warm, dry conditions predicted for the next several days. The seedling disease complex proliferates and large-scale seedling loss can occur in cool, moist weather/soil. Check with your Extension Agent for local data on the best time to plant a particular variety of cotton in your area.

In-furrow Fungicide Application

The decision of whether to make an in-furrow fungicide application is simplified by using the Seedling Disease Point System. It can be found in UGA Cooperative Extension Service’s bulletin called **Cotton Diseases and their Control**. This point system takes into account field history, soil moisture and temperature, 5-day forecast, planting date, tillage practice, irrigation, nematode populations and rotation crops.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Importance of Nutrient Management

Nutrient management directly influences the productivity and quality of a cotton crop. For example, excess nitrogen can cause rank growth, which reduces the yield and quality of the cotton produced. It may also provide habitats for undesirable cotton pests. Inadequate or excessive fertilizer applications can cause such problems as phosphorus buildup, rank growth, boll rot and defoliation.

The best IPM practice for cotton is ensuring a fast start, rapid development and early maturity. This can be facilitated through nutrient management. Identifying areas within a crop where certain nutrients are needed more than in other areas can be used to tailor your nutrient applications. This will help you avoid over or under applying.

Nutrient Sampling

Nutrient sampling lets you know if you are applying the appropriate rates and kinds of fertilizers. By understanding the specific needs of your crop,

fertilizers can be applied in the most judicial manner possible. In this way, you can achieve the highest economic yield and lowest environmental impact.

The two types of sampling techniques recommended here are petiole/tissue and soil nutrient sampling. Petiole/tissue sampling allows for in-season correction of problems. The recommended weekly sampling can allow detection of excesses or deficiencies of nitrogen, boron, potassium and phosphorus up to two weeks in advance. Tissue sampling indicates magnesium, sulfur, manganese, and zinc levels. Both tests are available through the University of Georgia testing programs and through private companies. Contact your Extension Agent for the correct techniques and timing of these two sampling methods and for information about the available testing programs.

In addition, soil samples can be taken to test for pH (5.8-6.3 is an ideal range for cotton) and other nutrients. Take these samples during the late summer or fall for accurate evaluation of the soil status. Yearly sampling is highly recommended.

CULTURAL AND SOIL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Calibration

Improper or lack of *calibration* of insecticide sprayers causes a waste of chemicals and money. Additionally, it may increase economic and/or environmental risk due to inappropriate application rates. Applying either too much or too little of a *pesticide* can be costly. At a minimum, you should calibrate *pesticide* sprayers/applicators at the beginning of each season. Regular adjustments are recommended, especially when you switch chemical formulations.

When *calibrating*, check all nozzles to find worn tips. Generally, output for each nozzle should be within 5-10% of the average output for all of the nozzles. It is important that the appropriate nozzles and strainers are used for individual applications. Clean and replace them in a timely manner as well.

Check ground speed of the applicator regularly. Speedometers can often be inaccurate, resulting in misapplication of pesticides or fertilizers. Typically, the sprayer ground speed is

determined by how long it takes a sprayer, under a load in field conditions, to travel a known distance. A list of Extension documents providing detailed guidelines for proper *calibration* of sprayers and spreaders can be found in the publication section at the end of this document.

To control damage caused by drip, anti-drip nozzles can be used. Also, take into account spray boom height and weather conditions. Damage from drip can weaken susceptible crops and make them more prone to diseases and insect damage and less resilient in adverse weather.

Cotton Variety Selection

Appropriate seed selection is a vital preventive step you can take to ensure a good cotton stand and maximum productivity. Choosing cotton varieties that are *genetically resistant* to such fungal diseases as *Verticillium* and *Fusarium* and to viral diseases and nematodes is important. Despite the controversy surrounding *genetic resistance* to insects, planting such varieties as Bt cotton has been shown to reduce the amount of insecticides applied. The best way to discover the optimum variety of cotton and the best production practices for your growing area is to find out through local data and experience.

Crop Rotation and Winter Cover Crops

Planting winter cover crops and rotating crops are practices that can affect your cotton crop in many positive ways. Leguminous winter cover crops can enhance soil quality, add nitrogen, decrease soil loss and reduce population of crop damaging nematodes. Planting cotton only every three years or in a longer rotation can have many of the same positive benefits. While increasing beneficial organisms, it can reduce disease and further reduce the number of parasitic nematodes and other insect pest populations. Benefits may also occur when an alternate crop is planted only every other year. Rotations such as cotton/sorghum/cotton, cotton/small grain/cotton, or cotton/sorghum/small grains have been particularly effective.

Cultural Management

Along with conservation or strip tillage there are many other cultural management techniques that can improve and preserve soil and protect surface water from the sediment present in the run-off. One of the major long-term benefits of consistently applied conservation tillage is the build up of organic matter that increases soil tilth and fertility. The longer you apply conservation tillage on your farm the more benefits to the soil structure and composition there are.

Practices such as contouring, properly maintaining terraces, and filter strips or grass waterways on downslope edges of fields and planting a fall cover crop are ways to protect soil and water quality. Some of these techniques are not as important if you have land with less than a 2-4% slope, depending on soil type and field conditions.

Soil Compaction

Soil compaction results from repeated trips across a field, not adhering to established traffic lanes for each operation and/or operating machinery in wet fields. This can result in yield reduction. An in-row straight shank subsoiler (“ripper”) can be

used in the spring to break up compacted layers known as “*hard-pans*,” whereas a winged or bent-shank subsoiler (“V-ripper”) is more suitable in the fall. Most Coastal Plain cotton fields in Georgia will probably require subsoiling every 1-2 years. To reduce the number of trips across a field, some innovative farmers are subsoiling and planting in the same pass. Field tests with a penetrometer or other suitable hand probe tool to determine the necessity of breaking up a hardpan. Deep tillage or in-row subsoiling can be expensive operations. Therefore, the best management practice is to delay the formation of compacted soil layers.

EDUCATION

To make informed decisions regarding all of the management techniques discussed so far, it is important to have the most recent information available. Your County Extension Agent or other reputable source is the best place to go for this material. They can provide you with numerous up-to-date brochures and newsletters relating to many topics that comply with state and federal regulations. They are also knowledgeable about local conditions and experiences.

NOTES:

GLOSSARY:

Reducing Environmental Impact and Pest Resistance

Banding: Applying pesticides in narrow bands only to the areas that require treatment (ex. between cotton rows), as opposed to broadcast treatments of an entire field.

Beneficial Organisms: Pollinators and insect, spider, mite, bacterial, fungal, and nematode predators or parasites of pests that have a positive impact on the crop in which they are present.

Calibration: A test measurement of the output of *pesticide* application equipment under typical operating conditions. Calibrations should be done: 1) before using equipment, 2) when you dilute or change the *pesticide* product, and 3) at regular intervals to check for signs of wear.

Carry over: The tendency for a herbicide to remain active in the soil.

Crop Rotation: Planting different crops in the same field, instead of growing the same crop year after year in the same field. Crop rotation can improve yields and make it easier to control some pests. If legumes are included in the rotation, nitrogen will be carried over to the next crop.

Cultivar: A particular type or variety of a plant endowed with unique characteristics.

Cut out: Cotton growth stage that usually occurs when fewer than five nodes or mainstem leaves remain above the uppermost white flower at first position.

Economic (“action”) threshold: Relates to the cost/benefits of using pesticides or other pest management options. Applying control measures below this level of damage cannot be justified economically. Any damage above this level requires control.

Genetic Resistance: An organism’s genetic “make up” which allows it to better withstand the negative effects of diseases, pests, herbivores, parasitism, certain chemicals, etc.

Herbicide Class: Herbicides grouped according to chemical structure and mode of action.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): A system of managing pest populations that integrates all methods of controlling a pest, including resistant host plants, natural enemies, cultural methods, pesticides, etc.

Pesticide: Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating insects, rodents, nematodes, fungi or weeds.

Pin head square: Cotton growth stage that typically occurs within 35-45 days of planting.

Resistance: A reduction in pesticide effectiveness due to genetic selection that occurs when organisms are repeatedly exposed to one control mechanism or chemical. Using various means of mechanical, chemical and biological control and/or chemicals from different classes can significantly reduce resistance development.

Scouting: Monitoring pest management sites (fields, greenhouses, animals, etc.) for the presence of pest and/or *beneficial organisms* (pollinators, predators/parasites of pests.)

Threshold: The level of a pest population at which control is necessary to prevent damage greater than the cost of control.

REFERENCES:

CONTACTS AND REFERENCES			
Organization	Responsibilities	Address	Phone Number
Chemtrac	Technical assistance for fires, spills or pesticide related medical emergencies.	1300 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22209	800-424-9300 Available 24 hours
Conservation Technology Information Center	Promote enhancement of soil and water quality.	1220 Potter Drive Room 170 West Lafayette, IN 47906	765-494-9555
Agricultural Pollution Prevention (P2AD)	Questions regarding regulation or pollution prevention practices.	BAE Department University of Georgia Driftmier Engineering Ctr. Athens, GA 30602	706-542-2154
National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)	Information on how to conserve, improve and sustain natural resources and the environment.	Southeast Regional Office 1720 Peachtree Road, NW Suite 446N Atlanta, GA 30309	404-347-6105
University of Georgia IPM Program	IPM references.	University of Georgia 413 BioSciences Athens, GA 30602	706-542-9035
National Pesticide Telecommunication Network	General pesticide information answered. Hours: 9:30am-7:30am EST.	NPTN Ag. Chemical Extension Oregon State University 333 Weniger St. Corvallis, OR 97331	800-858-7358
State Soil and Water Conservation Commission	Information on Agricultural Best Management Practices.	P.O. Box 8024 Athens, GA 30603	706-542-3065
University of Georgia Extension Water Quality Coordinator	Questions regarding the impact of farming practices on water quality.	Crop and Soil Sciences Athens, GA 30602	706-542-9072

PUBLICATIONS:

University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service Athens, Georgia 30602

- Calibration Method for Hydraulic Boom, Band Sprayers, and Other Liquid Applicators, Circular 683
- Calibration of Dry Fertilizer Applicators, C-798
- Calibration of Manure Spreaders, Circular 828
- 1999 Cotton Production Guide, CSS-99-07
- Cotton Scout Handbook, Entomology 97-PMR
- Georgia Pest Control Handbook, Special Bulletin 28
- How to Store, handle, and Dispose of Agricultural Pesticides
- Insect and Disease Identification Guide for IPM in the Southeast, Bulletin 849
- Pesticide Safety for Private and Commercial Applicators, Bulletin 1105
- Safe Handling and Storage of Pesticides, ENG 96-008

The following publication can be purchased from the University of Georgia:

- Agricultural Plant Pest Control, Special Bulletin 8
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator's Safety Guides: Applying Pesticides Correctly (General Standards), Special Bulletin 15

College of Agriculture, Business Office
Conner Hall, Room 203
The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602
706-542-8999

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission P.O. Box 8024, Athens, GA 30603

- Best Management Practices for Agriculture

Texas Agricultural Extension Service P.O. Box 1209, Bryan, Texas 77806-1209

- Recognizing the Good Bugs in Cotton, B-6046

Web Sites

<http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/cottonpickin>
<http://nracs.usda.gov>

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GEORGIA FARM *A*SYST TEAM MEMBERS:

Mark Risse, Ph.D., Public Service Assistance, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service/Pollution Prevention Assistance Division
William Segars, Ph.D., Extension Agronomist & Water Quality Coordinator, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
Lisa Ann Kelley, Program Specialist, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service/Pollution Prevention Assistance Division

INTERAGENCY LEADERSHIP

G. Robert Kerr, Director, Pollution Prevention Assistance Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Gale Buchanan, Dean and Director, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia
F. Graham Liles, JR., Executive Director, State Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Earl Cosby, State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

TECHNICAL REVIEWERS

Peter B. Goodell, IPM Entomologies/Nematologist, Cooperative Extension, University of California; Steve Brown, Agronomist – Cotton, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, UGA; Philip Roberts, Entomology, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, UGA; Mike Bader, Engineer, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, UGA; John Vickery, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Bill White, State Soil and Water Conservation Commission. This document was also reviewed by Doug Knox and Gary Jackson; National Farm *A*Syst Program; Georgia Cotton Team Members, UGA; and Extension and Pollution Prevention review committees. While the technical reviewers provided guidance in copy revisions and assisted in assuring accuracy of content, the views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the reviewers.

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Lisa Ann Kelley, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service/Pollution Prevention Assistance Division
GRAPHICS: Tina Fields, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
LOGO DESIGN: Jody Mayfield, Senior Artist, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
DESIGN REVIEW: Carol Nimmons, Georgia Cooperative Extension Service and Susan Williams, Florida Farm*A*Syst

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