

TEACHING BEST PRACTICES: 2019 MID-ATLANTIC CROP MANAGEMENT SCHOOL



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

ISSUE



Because agricultural producers face many environmental challenges...



it is important that they understand "best practices" (like crop rotation) that minimize impacts on soil, air, water and human health.

RESPONSE

The Mid-Atlantic Crop Management School (held Nov 19 to 21, 2019) addressed these needs for by providing education on topics including...



nutrient management (10 sessions),



crop management (nine sessions),



integrated pest management (seven sessions),



soil and water management (nine sessions),



and specialty, vegetable and fruit crops (nine sessions).

IMPACTS

The 2019 crop school saw 279 participants (61% return attendees from 2018), consisting of...



crop consultants,



extension educators,



farmers and farm managers,



agribusiness professionals,



soil conservationists



and personnel from DNREC.

1399 attendees completed speaker surveys, indicating that...

97%

thought the individual sessions were generally clear and well organized

93%

gained knowledge in the Certified Crop Adviser core competency areas

86%

planned to use this information in the future.

121 attendees completed program surveys, indicating that...

they consult on more than

747,000 ACRES

...and estimate the economic value of the information they received at

~\$250 PER ACRE!

The overall economic impact of the program is estimated at

\$8.3 MILLION!

ISSUE

Maintaining and improving the productivity and competitiveness of Agricultural production in the Mid-Atlantic Region is critical for both producers and consumers. Because they face many environmental challenges, it is imperative that they know best practices to minimize negative impacts on soil, air, water and human health.

The International Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) Certification Program is a voluntary program offered by the American Society of Agronomy that provides a benchmark for practicing agronomy professionals in the United States, Canada and India. Certification recipients must have the necessary education and expertise to advise clientele on agronomic practices. There are currently over 300 active CCAs in the Mid-Atlantic Region, (Delaware (DE), Maryland (MD), Virginia (VA), West Virginia (WV) and New Jersey (NJ)) that must complete continuing education in four major competency areas: nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management and crop management, and professional development. Many states within the region also have annual certification requirements for nutrient management (DE, MD, PA, VA, WV) and/or pesticide management (DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA, WV) that are completed via continuing education programs.

RESPONSE

The Mid-Atlantic Crop Management School was established in 1995 as a joint venture between the University of Delaware, University of Maryland, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University and the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The school addresses the continuing education and required certification needs of both the Certified Crop Adviser program and other regional agricultural clientele. The 2019 school was held from Nov. 19 to 21 in Ocean City, Maryland. Five concurrent sessions featured speakers from across the country on the latest research and implementation strategies related to nutrient management (10 sessions), crop management (nine sessions), integrated pest management (seven sessions), soil and water management (nine sessions), and an alternative session on specialty, vegetable and fruit crops (nine sessions).

IMPACT

The 2019 school drew 279 participants including crop consultants, extension educators, farmers and farm managers, agribusiness professionals, soil conservationists and personnel from the Delaware Department of Agriculture and Environmental Control (DNREC). A total of 1399 completed speaker evaluations were received and total of 121 participants completed a program evaluation.

On speaker evaluations, 97% of participants said the material presented was generally clear and well-organized. In addition, 93% indicated that they gained knowledge in the CCA core competency areas and 86% planned to use this information in the future.

On the program evaluation, crop school participants responded to the survey consult on more than 747,000 acres in the Mid-Atlantic region. Respondents estimated the economic value of the information they received at the crop school was up to \$250 per acre and that the overall economic impact of the 2019 Mid-Atlantic Crop Management School is estimated to be as much as \$8.3 million. Sixty-one percent of those attending in 2019 indicated that they also attended in 2018 with over half saying that they had adopted a new management practice or system in the past year.