



NORTH MISSISSIPPI ROW CROPS FIELD DAY

By Bonnie Coblenz

Close to 200 people attended the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center's Row Crops Field Day Aug. 8. The event, sponsored by MAFES and the Mississippi State University Extension Service, was held at the Lee County Agri-Center and in the fields of the R&E center.

The event started with a discussion of Roundup-resistant weeds and ways to manage fields with these weeds. This discussion was led by Bob Hayes, a researcher at the University of Tennessee. Three Mississippi farmers followed this presentation with discussions of their own weed-control efforts.

The program then moved outdoors where MAFES and Extension researchers and specialists made presentations at three stops to view corn, soybeans and cotton growing in the NMREC fields. Joe Johnson, Ted Wallace and cotton grower Keith Morton discussed skip-row cotton and row spacing. Dan Reynolds discussed cotton's response to Roundup formulations.

"The best economic benefit to skip-row farming is harvest," said Morton, who farms 500 acres of skip-row cotton in Faulkner. "You stretch out the four-row picker to almost six rows, and you get the crop out faster."

Two disadvantages are that government programs only pay for 75 percent of skip-row acreage planted, and crop insurance is reduced as well.

Erick Larson and Don Parker told field day participants about corn borer management and narrow-row cotton. Parker said no-till farming is a contributing factor in the increase in these pest numbers.

Soybeans were the last stop on the tour. Normie Buehring and Alan Blaine talked about soybean's response to seeding rates in narrow rows and early soybean production for north Mississippi. Buehring emphasized the need to plant according to the recommended rate, and Blaine spoke on the importance of scouting for stinkbugs and worms.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Lester Spell wrapped up the half-day event with an overview of agriculture in the state. He addressed the new Farm Bill; boll weevil eradication; the Land, Water and Timber Resource Board; catfish and beef labeling; ethanol; and invasive cogongrass in his comments.

"Not only are we a good producer of agriculture, but we have a lot of diversity," Spell said of the state.

Photography by Marco Nicovich

