

Mississippi Sweetpotato News

Summer 2014

Mississippi Sweetpotato Crop Report (8-12-2014)

Benny Graves, Executive Director, Mississippi Sweet Potato Council
Stephen L. Meyers, Sweetpotato Extension Specialist, MSU- Extension Service

Between a relatively dry spring, heavy summer rains, and unusually cool weather for a week in July, growers across Mississippi planted 20,400 acres of sweetpotatoes this year, an increase of about 11% from last year. We will not know the full effect of this unusual weather on the sweetpotatoes until harvest is well underway. Some initial sampling took place this week along with the harvest of some early planted fields. Harvest will get in full swing the first week of September. For many growers, this feels like a week later than an “average” year. Currently, demand for fresh market sweetpotatoes is great, and new crop roots should be met with a favorable market. The acreage planted to ‘Orleans’ increased again in 2014. We should have a good feel for how this variety performs in Mississippi as many growers have grown it for consecutive years.



Weed control this year has been hit or miss with weeds emerging throughout the growing season and overtopping the crop. The culprits include hophornbeam copperleaf, hemp sesbania, sicklepod, sida, and pigweed. Sedges continue to be problematic for sweetpotato growers. However, there is some hope. Some growers who rotated to soybean have had success in controlling the weed. When it comes to insects, 2014 has been the year of the armyworm. Worms showed up early and have multiplied. Remember, that now is the time to control armyworms. When the ground around the sweetpotato roots begins to crack, worms have access to and will feed on sweetpotato storage roots. Scout diligently and spray when needed.

Mississippi is excited to be hosting the National Sweet Potato Convention next year at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. The convention dates will be January 25th – 27th, 2015. For more information on the Convention, visit the Mississippi Sweet Potato Council webpage at mssweetpotato.org. The Convention will occur along with the National Sweetpotato Collaborator Group Meeting which will take place at the same venue January 24th - 25th. You are welcome to attend the Collaborator presentations and provide feedback and input for sweetpotato research conducted across the United States.

Finally, MSU will host its second annual **Sweetpotato Field Day** on Wednesday August 20th. Last year’s field day was a great success and we have a full program lined up this year. Registration will run from 7:30 to 8:30 AM. The program will begin at 8:30 and run through

lunch. Please, make time to be at this event. The program is enclosed. Harvest will be here in no time. We look forward to seeing you in the field.

MSU Wild Hog Research Needs Foresters, Farmers

MISSISSIPPI STATE -- Mississippi State University scientists are conducting research to determine the economic impact of wild hog damage to agriculture in Mississippi. Bronson Strickland and Jessica Tegt, Extension wildlife biologists in the university's Forest and Wildlife Research Center, are asking farmers and foresters to participate in the study.

Participants will be interviewed on any wild hog impact on their operations. Researchers also hope to conduct field surveys on some farms to determine the physical extent of wild hog damage and to identify surrounding landscape features that may promote or hinder wild hog access to fields.

While Mississippi farmers and foresters face many challenges, wild hogs cause particularly extensive damage to the agricultural landscape. Currently, the national economic impact of wild hog control and damage on public and private property is conservatively estimated at \$1.5 billion annually.

Researchers want the outcome of this study to benefit Mississippi farmers, foresters and other agricultural producers by shedding light on the extent of damage caused by wild hogs to land, crops, equipment and, ultimately, production and profitability.

In the long run, researchers want to help lawmakers, land managers and agricultural producers develop tools to accurately evaluate wild hog damage and mitigate losses through better management practices.

MSU and the Land, Water and Timber Board of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce fund this study, which is conducted through the university's Center for Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts.

Farmers and foresters interested in taking part in the study or those who have questions may contact Marina Denny with the MSU Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at mdenny@cfr.msstate.edu or 662-325-4722.



Carol Bannerman

Changes to Worker Protection Standard

James Dale- Branch Director, Plant & Pesticide Programs, MDAC

The Worker Protection Standard is a set of regulations put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency intended to prevent unreasonable adverse effects to farm employees from exposure to pesticides. These regulations include mandatory training, notification of applications, personal protective equipment, among other things.

The EPA has published some proposed changes to the Worker Protection Standard. Some of these changes include: annual training for employees as opposed to every five years like it is now; more extensive record keeping for pesticide applications, training, and re-entry interval notifications; requiring pesticide handlers to be at least 16 years old unless they fall under the family exemption; and other things in regards to training, recordkeeping, buffer zones, etc. While this outlines some of the proposed changes, there are many more and they are much more in depth.

The EPA has posted these proposed changes online and asked for comments in regards to them. Comments can be made at [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and the comment period is open until August 18th. For more information or questions please contact James Dale of the Bureau of Plant Industry at 662-325-7773 or email him at JamesD@mdac.ms.gov.

Information Released on Farm Energy Sales Tax Exemption

Samantha Webb Laird, MS Farm Bureau Federation

On May 7, the Mississippi Department of Revenue issued Notice [72-14-003](#). This notice establishes guidelines for changes in law as the result of House Bill 844 of the 2013 Regular Session, which amends Miss. Code Ann. Section [27-65-107](#) to exempt from sales taxation the sale of electricity, current, power, steam, coal, natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, or other fuel to manufacturers, custom processors, technology intensive enterprises, and to public service companies when used for industrial purposes. In addition, the bill exempts from sales taxation the sale of electricity, current, power, steam, coal, natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, or other fuel when sold to a producer or processor for use directly in the production of poultry products, livestock products, domesticated fish products, marine aquaculture products, plant or food products produced by commercial horticulturists, the processing of milk products, the processing of poultry and livestock feed, and the irrigation of farm crops. Enclosed is the affidavit for use with this exemption. Farmers are encouraged to check with your provider to see if the affidavit will be required. Not all providers will require the affidavits, but others will. If you have any questions about the energy sales tax exemption, please contact Samantha at swebb@msfb.org or 601-573-7913.

2014 Pontotoc Branch Sweetpotato Field Day

7:30-8:30 Registration

8:30-8:45 Welcome and opening remarks.

Stop 1

8:45-9:15

Updates

Mississippi Crop Update

-Stephen Meyers, Sweetpotato Extension Specialist

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Update

-Samantha Webb Laird, Sweetpotato Commodity Coordinator, MFBF

Bio-fungicides for Disease Control

-Ramon Arancibia & Jeff Main, Associate Research Prof. /Research Assoc.

Carotenoid Synthesis Research

-T. Casey Barickman, Assistant Research/Extension Prof.

End/Tip Rot Research

-Richard Baird & Stephen Meyers, Plant Pathology Prof. /Extension Specialist

Stop 2

9:30-10:00

Potential Herbicides for Weed Control in Sweetpotato

Weed Management Programs (Lorox, Reflex, Brake, Dual Mag, Command, Valor)

-Mark Shankle & Stephen Meyers, Research Prof. /Extension Specialist

Stop 3

10:15-10:45

Soil Fumigation to Manage Nematodes and Nutsedge

Effect of K-PAM and Dual Magnum Alone and in Combination.

-Stephen Meyers, Sweetpotato Extension Specialist

Fumigation Application Research Tool Design and Demonstration

-Jason Ward, Assistant Extension Professor

Stop 4

11:00-11:30

Specialty Products and Other Topic

Growth Stimulants in Sweetpotato

-Mark Shankle & Benny Graves, Research Professor /Helena Chemical

Herbicide Carryover

-Mark Shankle & Stephen Meyers, Research Professor /Extension Specialist

Stop 5

11:45-12:00

Cultural Practices and Alternative Crops

Poultry Litter and Cover Crops

-Jeff Main & Ramon Arancibia, Research Assoc. /Associate Research Prof.

Sesame as a Rotational Crop

-Mark Shankle, Research Professor

12:15 P.M. Lunch (sponsored by Industry Partners)

Visit the sweetpotato webpage to find color versions of the MS Sweetpotato Newsletter, links to production and pest management information, and slide presentations from past meetings at: msucares.com/crops/sweetpotato/index.html. Also, visit the Mississippi Crop Situation Blog at: Mississippi-crops.com for regular sweetpotato crop updates, recommendations, and/or reminders.