Field Crop Newsletter
November/December 2009

**Soybean Yield Contest**

Just a reminder the 2009 Soybean Production and Most Efficient Yield Contest rules and entry forms are located at the Onslow County Cooperative Extension Office. To be eligible to enter, you must produce three (3) or more contiguous acres with four straight sides of soybeans in North Carolina. The deadline for entry forms is **December 25, 2009**. Please call me to set up a time to come and measure your fields for the Contest.

**NC Tobacco Research Referendum**

On **November 19, 2009**, the NC Tobacco Research Referendum is being held to let tobacco growers decide if they wish to continue the self-assessment program. A 2/3 favorable vote will mean that growers are willing to continue to assess themselves to support tobacco research and education. The assessment is ten cents per hundred pounds of tobacco produced in North Carolina.

The check-off funds, about $300,000 annually, are collected at buying stations by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and then allocated by the NC Tobacco Research Commission to support research and extension projects for tobacco at NC State University.

Polling locations established in Onslow County:

1) NC Cooperative Extension Office in Jacksonville
2) Shaw Farm Supply in Richlands
3) Crop Production Services in Maysville

For more information on the referendum and projects funded by the check-off, please go to:

[http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/advancement/09TobaccoReferendum.htm](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/advancement/09TobaccoReferendum.htm)
Soil Sampling Strategy

The NCDA recommends sampling three to six months prior to planting. For field crops, submitting soil samples right after harvest provides plenty of time to plan a liming and fertilization program before the busy growing season.

Before sampling a large area, it is a good idea to make a detailed map of your land. Copies of aerial photographs from soil surveys may be helpful. Divide the map into individual sample areas of 20 acres or less. Each unique area should ideally have similar soil type, planting history and management history. Be sure to assign a short, permanent sample ID name to each area that will help you remember the location.

For coastal plain soils, collect samples every two years or test one-half of your land every year. Always use clean stainless-steel sampling equipment and a clean, plastic bucket. Brass, bronze or galvanized tools contaminate the sample with copper and/ or zinc.

DCP and ACRE Programs Begin

The USDA has begun the signup period for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE). Growers can sign up online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp or at their FSA offices. The signup period ends on June 10, 2010 and NO late applications will be accepted.

Now, let’s see if I can simplify the programs and explain them to help you make an informed decision!

The USDA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2010, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. USDA will issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2009. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price. The effective price is the higher of the national average market price received during the 12-month marketing year for each covered commodity and the national average loan rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity.

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm’s payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For the 2010 crop, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm’s direct payment is reduced by 20...
percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

For more information, please contact our local Farm Service Agency at (910) 455-4164.

**Tobacco Day 2009**

Tobacco Day will be held at the Johnston County Cooperative Extension Office in Smithfield, NC on Thursday, December 3. All growers, agricultural industry personnel, media and others interested in tobacco are invited to attend. Activities will include the variety display from the official variety tests and a summary of extension and research activities for tobacco in 2009. If you are interested in attending, you can contact me directly at (910) 455-5873 or register at: http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantpath/extension/commodities/tobacco/tobacco-day.html.

**CHRISTMAS CHEER TIME IS HERE AGAIN**

Onslow County 4-H County Council is again participating in the Elder Cheer Program. Since 1996 the Onslow County Adult and Family Services unit at the Department of Social Services has coordinated the Elder cheer program. This program places an emphasis on elderly and disabled population who are in resident care facilities, while giving our community the opportunity to share their holiday spirit.

On December 8th, join us at 6:00 pm for refreshments and at 6:30 pm the social gathering and assembling of items. Please plan on attending and completing a wonderful community service project.

In the meantime, please tell everyone you know that we are collecting the following items. All of these can be dropped off at the Cooperative Extension, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Please remind our staff that they are for the Elder Cheer Holiday Program. Items requested by Onslow County Elder Cheer are: lotion, candy (diabetic), aftershave, fruit baskets, socks, cassette tapes, key chains, watches, blankets, deodorant, electric blankets, combs, perfume, slippers, hair brushes, night gowns, batteries, gospel tapes, holiday novelties, toothbrushes, writing paper, stationery, support hose, powder, pajamas, disposable razors, personal care items (soap, shampoo, etc.), small flashlights, fashion jewelry, live plants, pens, window mounted bird feeders. County Council is also in need of baskets, tins and gift bags to help wrap these items. All of these items are due in the 4-H office by December 4th. For more information, contact Wanda Mills, 455-5873.