

Seed To Soil

When You Plant Cotton Affects What You Harvest

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How cotton planting date affects yields and fiber quality is a trial under study by Dr. Chris Main, University of Tennessee Extension cotton specialist,

“We continue to run our planting date trials here in Tennessee,” he said. “We start planting in mid-April and plant every two weeks until mid June using six different varieties in each planting date. Roundup Ready Flex varieties have been the focus of the trials the last two years, however this year we have expanded the trial to include six more LibertyLink varieties (Ignite tolerant) since acreage of those varieties is expanding to use different technology to manage glyphosate-resistant weeds.

“We utilize the trials throughout the year as diagnostic plots,” he continued. “If somebody calls me and they have a problem in the field

with cotton planted May 19 I can go to my plots and look at 12 different varieties planted on May 19 and get an idea what the crop should look like.”

The trials are aimed at validating what is already known to be true from a scientific standpoint about yields and planting date. The trials also demonstrate fiber quality properties, as planting date affects the quality of the fiber.

“We know we’re going to have reduced quality on these later planting dates; but are we hurting our fiber quality if we plant early?” he asked. “So we’re learning some things as we go along.”

This is the third year for these trials and Main sees no reason to end them any time soon.

“It is very valuable as a diagnostic tool throughout the entire growing season and will help evaluate new varieties as they become available,” he said. Δ

BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER: Senior Staff Writer, MidAmerica Farmer Grower

**Dr. Chris Main,
University of Tennessee
Extension Cotton
Specialist, discusses
a trial under study on
cotton planting dates
and how they affect
yields and fiber quality.**

