



The University of Georgia

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College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences



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REPARATIONS FOR THE 2006 CROP. (*Brown*) Don Shurley provided sobering comments about economics and budgets for the upcoming season (see January 20, 2006, contribution to Southern Cotton Growers on uga.cotton.org). There are at least two ways to think about production costs: cost per acre basis and cost per pound of lint produced. The numbers look tight, which means each input must be scrutinized. Your pencil must be “sharp.” Inputs such as fertilizer, fuel, seed/technology, pesticides have gone up in price. One obvious way to make “ends meet,” to improve the likelihood of profit, is to make good yields, which also increases the importance of management, which involves the timely application of knowledge and resources. Think and plan!

QUESTIONS ABOUT ABOUT AVICTA COMPLETE PAK (*Kemerait*) As the result of an increased awareness of the damage caused by nematodes and a blitzkrieg of an ad campaign, cotton growers and county agents continue to ask questions about the seed treatment combination, Avicta Complete Pak, from Syngenta. As growers rush to finalize their seed orders, there has been a frenzy of questions about Avicta and Temik.

From an educational standpoint, the Avicta advertisements have done a service to the cotton growers in the United States by raising the consciousness of nematodes in their fields. However, growers should recognize that these advertisements are carefully designed to sell a product. Growers must do their “homework” in order to make the best decision for selection of a nematicide (and thrips control) for their field.

I must admit that I have been impressed, and at times entertained, by the Syngenta ad campaign. I pass the time on my cross-Georgia drives hunting for Avicta billboards and get a little bit of satisfaction when I am able to explain an Avicta ad to my children when it flashes across the television at night. I even smile when I hear the *Southeast Farm Press* referred to as “*The Syngenta Farm Press*” because of all the ads for Avicta.

Here are my specific thoughts regarding the great Avicta-Temik debate of 2006. I have based these thoughts on the results from more than a dozen field trials that I have coordinated over the past three years.

1. The hugely successful ad campaign for Avicta Complete Pak has created an impression that the efficacy of the seed treatment for management of nematodes is universally accepted. In fact, there is still considerable uncertainty among many of my nematologist colleagues across the cotton belt about just how good Avicta Complete Pak really is.
2. I often here from growers that “Avicta Complete Pak is as good as 5.0 lb/A Temik 80% of the time”. To their credit, Syngenta is drawing from a very large data base of field trials conducted across the country. Although I am not sure how the 80% figure has been gleaned from their data, it is important to know whether a) the studies were conducted in fields infested with sufficient nematode populations (I assume they were) and more importantly, b) how did the response of Avicta and Temik compare to the Cruiser seed treatment alone. If Avicta and Temik both produce similar yields, but the yields are not different from Cruiser-treated plots where there is no nematode control, have we really assessed the power of the nematicide?
3. In our trials at the University of Georgia in 2004 and 2005, yields from plots treated with Avicta Complete Pak were typically not statistically different from 5.0 lb/A of Temik. In about 50% of these trials, Avicta Complete Pak numerically out-yielded Temik, and in a little over 50% of the trials, Temik numerically out-yielded Avicta. This tends to support the Syngenta claim of efficacy. However, where Temik out-yielded Avicta, the yield advantage to Temik was typically greater than when Avicta out-yielded Temik, though again, differences were often not statistically different.
4. Although our field trials in 2004 and 2005 were conducted in “nematode” fields, we really never saw a significant difference between the Avicta and Cruiser yields. As discussed above, have we REALLY assessed the efficacy of Avicta?
5. For growers who have a severe problem with nematodes in at least some of their fields, they should recognize that they need to use products like Telone II or perhaps Temik at plant and side-dress to effectively manage the problem. For such fields, I do not recommend the use of Avicta, at least as a “stand alone” product.
6. For growers with low-to-moderate levels of nematodes, Avicta Complete Pak may be an option that they want to consider. If a grower chooses to use Avicta Complete Pak in a field with low-to moderate nematode pressure, I would recommend that they include side-by-side comparisons with their standard treatment, e.g. Temik 5.0 lb/A. I do not recommend that a grower switch COMPLETELY from Temik to Avicta; we still have much to learn!
7. Although Avicta Complete Pak has gained tremendous momentum, growers need to remember that it is at best, as good as 5.0 lb/A Temik. There is no need to rush to change completely from a practice that has been effective in the past. The 2006 season will be a great test for Avicta. If the product stands up to the “nematode test”, more growers will adopt the practice in the future. However, if Avicta does not perform as advertised over a wide range of fields, cautious growers in the 2006 season may end up as the real winners.
8. Finally, Avicta Complete Pak does contain Dynasty as one of its components. Although the addition of this fungicide certainly won't hurt, we rarely see any yield advantage for

Georgia's cotton growers where fungicide "overcoats" are used in addition to the standard fungicide seed treatment package already applied to the seed.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT ROUNDUP READY FLEX TECHNOLOGY. *(Brown)* This article submitted for publication in *Cotton Farmer* magazine. In the "New Developments from Industry" session at the recent Beltwide, a presenter suggested that growers commit no more than 30 percent of their 2006 acreage to the company's new technology and concurrent varieties. My immediate thought, "Maybe he's a decimal point off." Traditional wisdom is that new stuff should occupy closer to 3 than 30 percent of a grower's total acreage. An exception might be the case in which new technology represents the "salvation" from crisis, which was exactly the situation for introduction of Bollgard cotton in 1996 following 1994-95 disasters with insecticide resistance in tobacco budworm.

Speaking of new technology, there is sufficient seed to plant almost 3 million acres of Roundup Ready Flex (RF) cotton in 2006. The technology is superb. The varieties are new.

At The University of Georgia, we believe Roundup Ready (RR) and RF technologies are in peril. We have confirmed glyphosate resistance in Palmer amaranth, our most common pigweed. We are seeking to determine how widespread it is in our state, and there are scientists investigating pigweed control issues in other states.

The loss or the threat of loss of pigweed control diminishes the value of RR and lowers the potential value of RF. It ultimately threatens cotton production in our state.

To preserve these technologies, we need to step back and systematically include "conventional" tools with RR and RF cotton. Roundup-only programs -- those which exclusively use glyphosate early and late -- will lead to the demise of the technologies. Published prices indicate that RF is \$10 to 14 more per acre than RR. To combat pigweed, we'd love to see that much committed to conventional products in RR and RF cotton.

GEORGIA QUALITY COTTON AWARD *(Jost)* Results from the first ever Georgia Quality Cotton Award are currently being tabulated. Some preliminary results indicate that certain Georgia growers produced cotton that received over 5 cents/lb in premiums (based on the loan chart). Thus, quality cotton can be produced in Georgia! When this award was first created this was one of the main goals, to show not all Georgia cotton is of poor quality.

Some impressive quality numbers were achieved by many of the winners of this award. For example, on over 300 acres one grower produced averaged a uniformity percentage of 81.2 (state average was 80.2). Another grower, on over 1000 acres, produced an average staple of well over 35 (state average was 34.7).

When these growers were asked what it takes to produce quality cotton some had some interesting responses. One grower said, "When it comes to picking we don't pay attention to the

calendar, we just go!” Another stated, “It’s a contest with stink bugs, they want it, and I won’t let ‘em have it!”

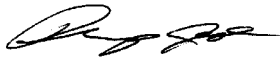
These top quality cotton producers summed up quite nicely what UGA Extension has been saying for quite a while, “be on time with stink bug control and harvest.”

The Georgia Quality Cotton Awards banquet will be held in early March. Look for more details on the quality numbers and production practices utilized to produce this quality cotton after that.

COUNTY MEETING SCHEDULE POSTED (*Jost*) As an addition to the UGA Cotton Web page (www.ugacotton.com), the schedule of county meetings is now posted. Any changes in this schedule will be posted as soon as possible.

Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on these subjects.

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