



*Winter Newsletter
March 2011*

Ashburn Hosts Annual GCTA Meeting 2011

The GCTA Annual Meeting was held in Ashburn this year with farmers, NRCS, UGA Extension and Agricultural Research Service personnel in attendance

**FIRST MORNING SESSION:
The Use of Cover Crops**

Mr. Burton Heatwolde of Sunshine Place Farms discussed the use of tillage radish to help alleviate soil compaction. The tillage radish is similar

to oilseed radishes, except that the plant puts most of its energy into a large tap root that can penetrate compacted layers in the soil. The tillage radish should be planted in early fall to allow good tap root development. It can winter kill, if temperatures in the 20°F occur over the winter. Otherwise it should be killed before it goes to seed in the spring. The radish is also reported to reduce nematode populations. Mr. Heatwolde is working with Dr. Bob Kemerait to evaluate the effectiveness. Mr. Heatwolde also discussed the use of Sunn hemp and Lupin. Sunn hemp is a summer cover crop that can fix large amounts of nitrogen in 60 days. The crop should be terminated after 60 days to keep it from getting too tough. It would not work well with cotton or peanuts, but could be used after a corn crop or to help rebuild fertility in a poor field. Lupin also can fix large amounts of nitrogen. It is a cool season cover and should be planted in early fall. Next **Mr. Clayton Anderson** of Register talked about his experience in mixing cereal cover crops. Mr. Anderson uses mixtures of rye, oats, and wheat. He finds the mixtures easier to plant into because he does not roll his cover crop. Finally, **Dr. Ted Webster** discussed the ARS work with lupin, fava beans, and black oats. He reports they did not have good success with fava beans as a cover, and in their trials rye had as much biomass as black oats. The cold weather this winter caused die off with the black oats. They have seen the most nitrogen supplied by lupin. When a lupin cover crop was followed by energy sorghum, they saw increased yields in the sorghum crop; however, they did not see a similar response in cotton. They are evaluating a rye/lupin mix to supply nitrogen as well as suppress weeds.

**SECOND MORNING SESSION:
Weed Management**

The second session focused on weed management, particularly the resistant palmer amaranth. **Mr. Jimmy Bramlett of NRCS** presented

information on a 9 county resistant pigweed project that is focusing on the use of high biomass rye cover crop to suppress weed germination. This year the project is confined to the Ocmulgee RC&D where the problem in Georgia originated. They are working on a much larger program that would cover the state. **Dr. Andrew Price** of ARS in Auburn, Alabama discussed potential weed problems on the horizon. He presented information on problems developing in neighboring states as two things to be aware of for Georgia. These included cocklebur, water hemp and some other species of amaranth that are showing resistance to various herbicides. The best option for farmers is to rotate crops because different crops disrupt different weed species' life cycles, to intensify production by double cropping or using

cover crops which leaves less time for weeds to take over, and to rotate herbicide chemistries. All of these approaches will help prevent resistance from developing.

**AFTERNOON SESSION:
Integrating Cattle into Cotton Production**

After a good lunch, **Dr. Dwight Fisher of the USDA ARS** in Watkinsville, Georgia talked about integrating cattle into cotton

production. Research from the Watkinsville station indicates that cattle can be grazed on a rye cover crop without reducing the following cotton crop if properly managed. The value of the grazed rye cover was about 1 ton per acre. Dr. Fisher stressed that you have to be a good manager to make this system work. You have to be ready to move the cattle in quickly as the rye begins to grow rapidly and be able to move them off quickly when it is grazed down to the right level. Farmers can see reduced cotton yields due to reduced carbon inputs from the biomass and compaction if the grazing is not managed properly.

BUSINESS MEETING, LAMAR BLACK PRESIDING

We heard from Ms. Sherry Carlson about the scholarship support GCTA has given over the years for the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop. This event allows students interested in conservation the chance to learn about various natural resource issues. Mr. Clayton Anderson gave the Treasurer's report. The Nominating Committee recommended Dr. Gary Hawkins, Mr. Roy Hardin, and Mr. Bob Rawlins serve another 3-year term on the Board. This was passed by acclamation.

**FIELD DAY
RUSTY IRVIN FARM**



The group adjourned to the Field Day where we saw a field that had been managed to reseed in crimson clover cover crop for eight years on the Rusty Irvin Farm. Mr. Irvin has planted cotton, corn and peanuts behind the clover cover crop which he terminates when seed is just beginning to set. This practice allows enough hard seed so new clover germinates in the early fall. He has not experienced problems with nematodes and has been able to reduce his commercial nitrogen purchases.

Join or Renew Now!

Dues to the state alliance are \$15/year. Send your dues to:
Clayton Anderson, GCTA Treasurer
918 J M Strickland Road
Register, GA 30452

If you are a member of a local alliance, GCTA dues are included with your local dues.

As always, it was good to see old and new faces and a lot of good information was exchanged.