

## **Integrated Crop Management meeting**

### **June 3, 2015, face-to-face meeting at MAC**

Attending: Pedro Andrade, Lydia Brown, Paul Brown, Peter Ellsworth, Al Fournier, Rick Gibson, Bill McCloskey, Ayman Mostafa, Kurt Nolte, Randy Norton, Russ Tronstad

#### **I. Update on hiring and budget issues related to programs (Paul Brown)**

Extension budget is in better shape than the college, but \$3.5 mil allocated last year by the legislature has been obligated. Around \$1.2 million went to the county offices to restore basic personnel and services there. No funds likely for new positions not already in the pipeline for probably at least a year. From here on out, hiring done will be based on retirements in Extension. A lot of position interviews are currently underway, so Extension will have more people on the ground in a few months. Joshua Sherman in Southeast Arizona is so far the only crop position that is in place out of 10 ANR positions that were proposed. There is enough money coming forward to hire perhaps 5 individuals (specialists or agents), but not all of those will be ag positions. The “crops” program is currently down:

Cropping Systems Specialist (formerly Wang)

Irrigation Specialist (formerly Martin)

Pinal County / Area Agent (formerly Loper)

Plant Pathology Extension Specialist (reduced to half-time and soon to be formerly Olsen)

Pinal County ANR Agent (soon to be formerly Rhodes)

#### **II. Transition plan and replacement for ANR Agent in Pima/Pinal Counties**

Jeff recognizes the importance of Central AZ agent positions and Shawna’s position will definitely be the first to move forward. Paul would like to see a second central AZ position (maybe in the following fiscal year). Could be an agent or a crops specialist. Plant Sciences has put forward both agronomy and plant pathology positions. The pathologist position won’t likely move forward until Mary Olsen retires. Barry Pryor’s partial appointment as Extension plant pathologist (35%) is temporary – he is filling in as a short-term solution.

#### **III. Review of Current/Summer/Fall Topics/Issues to Address**

##### Yuma (Kurt Nolte)

Would prefer a cotton meeting August 12 or 13. Randy could do a cotton root rot demonstration at that time. Barry is okay on these dates for a La Paz meeting as well.

John and Peter plan to do a PCA workshop in Yuma before the end of June to talk about the resistance management chemical use map project.

##### Maricopa, Pinal / Pima (Ayman Mostafa)

Rick Gibson and Ayman have talked about addressing Pinal County needs.

Ayman has confirmed 2 tent talks for July 1 & 8 (see below)

- Peter plans to do a PCA meeting in Maricopa before the end of June to talk about resistance management chemical use map project.
- July 1 – Rayner’s in Goodyear (cotton)
- July 8 - at Jason Rovey’s farm (alfalfa)

- TBD – Ak-Chin (Pima cotton focus, plus forage topics) [Ayman & Randy]
- TBD - Marana (Top Guard trials) probably late July or early Aug [Ayman & Randy]
- MAC field day – in the fall

#### Cochise/Safford (Randy Norton)

- Safford. Late season meeting, tentatively the week of Aug 10: Tues, 8/11 with a focus on Top Guard. Pedro should be involved because there is interest in drones there.
- Annual variety trial field day, week of Oct 5.

#### **IV. Input of Specialists and others on issues and topics to address for this summer/fall**

- Peter: A series of workshops with PCAs to roll out the website for the chemical use maps in late June. Maps will be available to PCAs on secure website. Others can request on a case-by-case basis.
- Al will ask agents to circulate an online survey (pre-survey related to adoption of the maps). Al will contact Ayman, Rick G, Barry T. and Kurt. The maps do not cover SE AZ, and Randy will not need to be involved.
- Russ asked about fallow acres for this year compared to the prior 3 years. Not much of an increase in SE AZ, maybe even more planted. About 3,000 acres in Yuma up on the Mesa due to a water transfer involving the CAP. More fallow acres in Pinal County this year, probably up 10% to 15%, particularly around San Carlos.
- Peter has had a call about brown stink bugs coming out of wheat recently in La Paz County. He has also received calls from Cochise County. We have not seen much for BSB so far in central AZ. Because of the increase in wheat and other small grain acreages, we may see greater concentrations of BSB on cotton and other crops as they move out of wheat.
- AZ Cotton Growers has GIS maps of crops around most of AZ and where cotton is grown. Other groups have put together some mapping based on satellite data. Satellite imagery is freely available. A group doing this out of Tucson mentioned that satellite imagery is not useful for melons. Some ground truthing is required to supplement satellite imagery. Peter is meeting with AZ Cotton Research and Protection Council to request use of their crop mapping data in the near future. They currently do a crop survey twice annually. BLM also has estimates of crop types and geographic distribution.
- Issue associated with any seed crop (or any crop) that contracts for pollination services. EPA has out for public comment new rules that affect growers working with these services. It prohibits the outright use of many insecticides. Anyone can submit comments to EPA during the comment period. The APMC will try to solicit input from key stakeholders. Please pass the word along to your growers. Al & Peter will write something up for agents to share with growers.
- Populations of kochia are getting hard to control in some parts of the state. Bill indicated that kochia in Kansas Settlement had very different responses to 44 fl. oz/Acre of RoundUp.
- Water policy discussions. Growers cannot find much scientific data to support their arguments, e.g., “we are now growing more with less water,” but they need data to support this. How can we help or respond to these needs? Pedro suggested a project that

might help address some of these questions, but they approached key individuals and growers they did not get support for the project. Ayman suggests we have further discussion around this topic, perhaps with input from outside groups. Paul: some work has been done on this in UA Cooperative Extension, in various places (Ottman on corn, Silvertooth on cotton and others, Sanchez in Yuma). Paul suggests we should compile all this information, much of which is in commodity reports, and provide it to groups looking for information on crop growth under water stress conditions. There is an opportunity to fund new research in this area where needed. Rick Ward has said he would like to make MAC a forum for discussion between Ag and municipal interests. CE could help broker these kinds of discussion. Personnel at the Water Resources Research Center are not viewed as having the ag expertise to serve as a viable referee between Ag and municipal interests in the water arena. (Attention was brought forth on a new ProPublica press release, “Holy Crop: How federal dollars are financing the water crisis in the West” online article that quotes Greg & Howard Wuertz: <https://projects.propublica.org/killing-the-colorado/story/arizona-cotton-drought-crisis> .)

#### **V. Setting Field/Meeting Locations and Dates (including next ICM meeting and format)**

Extension Annual Conference Aug 4-6 in Tucson. The ICM team will plan to meet there on 8/6/15. Bill is on the planning committee and will contact Dominic Rodriguez about securing meeting space.

#### **VI. Other meetings**

- AZ Cotton Growers will convene on 7/8/15; Bob Nichols will have some sort of Cotton Inc review meeting on July 5 (?). Peter thinks the goal is for Bob to work with ACGA to improve their research program.
- Oct 14 Delta Pine is having their fall field day meeting
- Bayer meeting, sometime the same week as Delta Pine

**Action Item:** Bill to contact Dominic Rodriguez (Ag Extension Admin., Operations Coordinator), ICM Team would like to meet Aug 6 at Annual Conference.