Extension Focuses on Peanut Education in Irwin County, Georgia.

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Educational efforts continue year long and are focused on production issues facing Irwin County and area peanut farmers. Meetings, on-farm trials, demonstrations, newsletters and other methods are used to bring information to the farmer. Each year Extension meetings focus on production, crop budgets, weed control and disease control. Over the last several years on-farm trials were focused on such topics as fungicide comparisons, seed spacing, and many others. Collaboration with county agents, specialists and researchers is a key component in many educational efforts. As harvest approaches peanut maturity clinics become a major segment of the educational focus. Peanut yields have been increasing in recent years and many factors contribute to that increase especially the use of peanut maturity clinics conducted by Extension. Irwin County, Georgia has a long history of high yields and quality peanuts. Farmers continuously seek out the help of Extension on numerous subjects like variety selection, production issues, fungicide programs, maturity determination, crop budgeting, pesticide usage, sprayer calibration, and irrigation scheduling among others. The educational focus is to meet farmer needs through many various methods with an end result to increasing profitability and quality. Many of the day to day educational efforts are achieved through one on one contact either by phone, office or farm visits. Information is also presented to farmers through a weekly newspaper column. An emailed newsletter reaches 350 farmers and agribusinesses with an average of over 30 newsletters per year with many receiving news on their smartphones. The newsletter is now in a blog format. Other media, like television, radio and video, are also utilized on a less frequent basis. Extension is 100 years old this year and as program methods have changed over time the effectiveness of traditional meetings, farm visits and on-farm demonstrations has remained.