Issues Associated with Expansion of Peanut Production in Pitt County, North Carolina.

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Peanut acreage in Pitt County is projected to increase by 15% in 2012 due to the introduction of new peanut producers into the peanut market. Peanut acreage in Pitt County has increased due to improved contract prices, the decline of tobacco farmers, and reduced prices for cotton. Since 2009, total flue-cured tobacco acreage has decreased by 33% for county producers. The increase in peanut acreage occurred in fields with no history of peanut production. Cooperative Extension in Pitt County, North Carolina assisted growers by providing a check list of recommended production practices that have been shown to maximize yields per acre. Eleven growers were enlisted in an educational program to receive information from the county center in order to respond to questions raised by these first-time producers. These questions were related to topics such as equipment selection, field selection, seeding rate, varietal selection, and disease management.