

## **Educational Objectives**

As a result of attending these webinars:

- Farm participants will report an increase in confidence in implementing practices in crop management, pest management, and nutrient management on their farm.
- Agriculture professional participants will report an increase in confidence in advising their clients to implementing practices in crop management, pest management, and nutrient management on their farm.
- Farm participants will implement practices in crop management, pest management, and nutrient management on a percentage of their farm acres.
- Agriculture professional participants will use the information to advise a percentage of their clients to implement practices in crop management, pest management, and nutrient management on their farm.

## **Program Activities and Teaching Methods**

Colleagues in the Crops and Soils program develop programming designed to provide updates and share research with both farmers and agriculture professionals during the growing season to meet these outcomes through face-to-face field days and other in-field formats. In 2020, face-to-face meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Crops and Soils program area formed a team to develop a virtual program called the Badger Crop Connect (BCC).

The target audience for the BCC were farmers, agronomists, crop consultants, government agencies, and other agricultural professionals. The BCC consisted of ten bi-weekly programs and two special edition programs beginning in May and ending in September. County agriculture educators and state specialists provided updates on research projects and guidance on current crop production practices.

The team used the Zoom Meetings platform to offer these virtual BCC programs. Slides and materials were posted on the Crops and Soils program website after each session. Videos were not posted to the site due to university video captioning requirements and time constraints of team members. Recordings were accessible to county educators in the Crops and Soil program folder located in Microsoft Teams to be used to create educational material for their specific county needs.

Continuing education units were offered during the webinar for Certified Crop Advisers to maintain their certification.

## **Results and Impact Statements**

This webinar series was shared on the National Certified Crop Adviser Calendar, the Wisconsin Crop Manager, various statewide agriculture and local media outlets, and through email lists of county educators and state specialists.

A total of 415 farmers, crop consultants, government agency personnel, agricultural media, and other agriculture service providers registered to attend one or more of the webinars. Over the twelve sessions, 1217 unique sign-ins into the meetings occurred. A total of 478 or 39% of the participants consisted of CCAs.

Demographic data was gathered during each seminar with 478 out of the 1217 completing the poll to report race, ethnicity, gender, and age. While no intentional effort was made to directly outreach to diverse audiences, the following races, ethnicity, and gender from protected and underserved audiences were reported:

- Two individuals reported as American Indian or Alaskan Native
- One reported their race as Asian
- One report being of two or more races
- Three individuals reported their ethnicity as Hispanic
- Eighty-five individuals reported their gender as female

419 (about 34%) of the participants completed the evaluation questions at the end of every session about how useful the information was and how confident the participant was in implementing the practice on their farm or advising a client to implement the practice.

On usefulness of the information:

- 58% of the participants reported the information presented as very useful
- 30% of the participants reported the information as useful

On confidence level of using the information:

- 48% of the participants indicated that they strongly agreed that they were more confident in using the information
- 40% of the participants indicated that they somewhat agreed that they were more confident in using the information

A post evaluation was conducted during October and sent to the 415 participants that registered to attend one or more of the sessions. 111 (26.7%) of the 415 surveys sent out were returned.

Those that returned the survey included:

- Farmers (12.61%)
- Agronomists/Crop Consultants (38.74%)
- Lenders/Financial Consultants (0.9%)
- Government Agency staff (20.72%)
- Educators (17.12%)
- Other that included students and agricultural media (9.91%)

Major impacts from the post evaluation showed that:

- 80.43% of agronomists and crop consultants, lenders, government agency staff, and educators (n=92) reported that they were able to use the information to make recommendations to their clientele.
- 85.71% of the 14 farmers that answered the survey reported that they implemented the knowledge they learned on their acreage.

Other impacts included:

- Two individuals reported that they used the information to write articles in news media to educate farmers.
- 97.27% of the participants reported that they somewhat to strongly agree that the webinars were a valuable use of time
- 69.9% reported being very satisfied with accessibility of the online format
- 72.82% reported being very satisfied with the length of each webinar
- 50.49% reported being very satisfied with the level interactivity

- 478 continuing education units (CEUs) per session were earned by Certified Crop Advisers to maintain their certification

In the post evaluation, one CCA commented, "During a long career as a CCA in Wisconsin I have always appreciated the input from UWext. This format was the best opportunity for connecting with the UW I have ever experienced. Topics were extremely timely, presented topics of great relevance, and all were greatly appreciated." Several other CCAs expressed the same gratitude for the opportunity to earn CEUs. During the Wisconsin CCA Board meeting, the value and timeliness of the BCC series was discussed, and the Board expressed appreciation for this opportunity for their members.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

- Evaluation was provided directly after the meeting through the poll function of Zoom consisting of five-point Likert scale questions.
- A post evaluation using a Qualtrics survey was emailed to participants after the sessions were complete,. This survey consisted of multiple choice, Likert scale, and short answer questions. , The survey was emailed three times throughout a span of four weeks to optimize responses
- Testimonials were also forwarded from a state specialist regarding the Wisconsin CCA Board.

Although the BCC series was developed in response to the COVID restrictions on face-to-face programming, the overwhelming response and success of this program resulted in the BCC becoming an integral part of the Crops and Soils programming portfolio. The team continues to examine methods to offer statewide agronomy education using an online platform to provide and develop educational materials and further extend our reach to farmers and agricultural professionals searching for information on agronomic practices in Wisconsin.