

Private applicator training within the Ag Update format allows for specialists to deliver subject matter to new clients

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INTRODUCTION

Private pesticide applicators in Missouri are required to be recertified every five years. This can be done by in-person training or by viewing a CD. County Extension offices encourage producers to attend the meeting format. By doing so, producers are trained at one time and the training materials can be updated and fresh.

After training, applicators are invited to stay and listen to 20 to 30 minute technical and problem solving presentations from other specialists including agronomy, livestock, agricultural engineering, agricultural business and horticulture.

The meetings typically start at 8:00 a.m. and conclude by 12:00 p.m., though this schedule will be adapted to the specific county. We call this meeting format Ag Updates.



Wayne Flanary, Field Specialist in Agronomy, teaching private pesticide applicator training in Maysville.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specialists work as a team to hold county Ag Updates in their assigned counties. Sometimes, there are presenter schedule conflicts. However, we adjust the program and move forward.

We use letters inviting producers to the training which increases attendance that are mailed by each individual county. Letters typically contain standard information along with the training starting and ending time and the topics to be addressed by other specialists.

Newspaper and radio are used to advertise the event. Email lists are also used.

Topics are selected by the individual specialists or specialists with the same subject area working as a group. Length is also determined by specialists and may be modified based on schedule.

Hands-on learning is valuable during the Ag Update as our horticulture specialist uses samples that can be passed around during the presentation. For example, he brings invasive species samples of brown marmorated stink bug and emerald ash borer.

RESULTS

During the applicator training, we explain that other specialists will be coming to make presentations and invite them to stay after the applicator training. Then as applicator training concludes, evaluation surveys are provided to the applicators which also include the other speakers and topics. Next, applicators are handed the required paperwork which is to be submitted to the Missouri Department of Agriculture. As they are filling out the paperwork, the first subject matter specialist loads their computer presentation and then start their presentation. The presenter for the applicator training again invites producers to stay and introduces the first subject matter specialist.

With years of experience, we have learned we need to “setup” the transition so producers know what is happening and can leave if necessary. If done correctly, the majority of applicators will stay for updates from the other specialists.

The following is an example evaluation instrument for the Holt County Ag Update for the spring of 2019 to determine if we are meeting the needs of producers.

Holt Ag Update Evaluation										
Circle the appropriate answer	Poor - 1	Fair - 2	Average - 3	Good - 4	Excellent - 5					
Did you like this meeting?	1	2	3	4	5					
Rate the value of this meeting	1	2	3	4	5					
Circle the appropriate answer:										
My Understanding and Knowledge										
Before The Presentation					After The Presentation					
How would you describe your understanding of the following:	None	Little	Moderate	Quite a Bit	Complete	None	Little	Moderate	Quite a Bit	Complete
Private Applicator Training	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Strategies to Reduce Input Costs without Reducing Yield - Jim Crawford - Field Specialist in Agricultural Engineering	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Managing Beef Heifers Economically to be Successful Replacements - Amie Schleicher, Field Specialist in Livestock	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Farm Market Outlook - Jackie Spainhower, Field Specialist in Ag Business	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Managing Fertilizer and Chemical Input Costs - Wayne Flanary, Field Specialist in Agronomy	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Invasive Pest Update - Tom Fowler, Field Specialist in Horticulture	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Suggestions?										



Amie Schleicher, Field Specialist in Livestock, discusses forage quality in Maryville.



Jim Crawford, Field Specialist in Agricultural Engineering, discusses how to reduce input costs without reducing yields in Savannah.

Evaluations are summarized and entered into our state reporting system. Here is an example report from Daviess County held on March 1, 2017.

Event name: Daviess County Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Ag Update	
Event #: 398726 Session dates: 3/1/2017	
Team efforts	
Wayne Flanary presented Private Applicator Training focused on how to use Xtendimax plus VaporGrip and Engenta labels which is dicamba. The goal was to prevent offsite injury to crops and sensitive plants by proper training on how to use products.	
Bob Kelly, Ag Business, presented updated on leases and 2017 ag costs.	
Shawn Swearing, Livestock, presented update on how to increase profits in times of reduced margins.	
Tim Baker, Horticulture, presented update on drift on to sensitive horticulture crops and how to use the driftwatch website.	
Customer quotes	
On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent.	
Did you like this meeting?	4.7
Rate the value of this meeting	4.9
Learning	
Growers rated their understanding and knowledge gained on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent:	
Private Applicator Training - before the meeting 2.9 and after the meeting 4.6	
Leases and 2017 costs and returns - before the meeting 2.7 and after the meeting 4.3	
Livestock update - before the meeting 3.1 and after the meeting 4.4	
Horticulture update - before the meeting 2.4 and after the meeting 4.4	

CONCLUSIONS

Over the years, our evaluation data on a scale of 1, being poor and 5, being excellent, the overall value has ranged between 4 and 5 which indicates good to excellent.

Also our producers (applicators) are surveyed for their knowledge level before the presentation and then after. Knowledge gained typically ranges from 0.8 to an 1.1 point increase.

Approximately 40% of the producers choose to leave after the private pesticide applicator training whereas about 60% stay. Topics and titles that are important to producers are critical for producers to judge whether it is worth their time to stay.

Producers attending Ag Updates recognize other subjective matter specialists which results in additional requests and producer attendance at events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Currently, thirteen field specialists contribute and participate in these events.