

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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Cropping Challenges for 2011

Through interactive video technology Williston will host a “Cropping Challenges” meeting on Wednesday, December 8, 1:30 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Williams County Courthouse.

The meeting will feature several NDSU Extension staff discussing topics including economics of crop production inputs, application of late season pesticides, the spill prevention, control and countermeasure (SPCC) program, soil health and crop market outlook.

In recent years there has been numerous crop input products offered to farmers. With a positive economic outlook, producers have been willing to invest in these products in an effort to maximize profits. NDSU researchers have studied many of these products and are now able to report the results.

Proper identification of a crop’s growth stage is very important when applying crop protectants. Application of crop protectants at the wrong stage can result in reduced effectiveness or crop injury. I think most producers are comfortable staging the various crops at early growth stages but may admit to having questions about the more advanced growth stages. A session on how to identify the most advanced stages will be part of the meeting.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made some amendments to the rules under the SPCC program. These rules will affect most farm and ranch operators. The goal of the SPCC program is to prevent oil spills into waters of the United States. The key feature of the program requires farmers and other facilities to have an oil spill prevention plan. Part of the Cropping Decisions meeting will provide producers with a basic overview of the SPCC program. This will help producers determine if they need a plan, what to include in the plan and what may be required to implement a plan.

Soil health, cover crops and relay cropping are issues included in the meeting. A cover crop chart and computer program developed at the Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory will be demonstrated.

Regarding the market, the meeting will include a discussion on the current outlook for wheat and other crops that impact our area. This session will also involve highlights of the current corn and soybean outlook as these crops may be significant players in a potential battle for 2011 crop acres.

The meeting is open to the public at no charge. A similar meeting will be held in Crosby, also on December 8, but starting at 9 a.m. at the Dakota Theater.

Introductory Pesticide Training

Commercial or public applicators and dealers who are new to the pesticide certification program can save some time and expense by participating in one of five statewide internet videocasts scheduled this winter and next spring. Dates of these videocasts are December 20, January 24, March 11, April 11 and May 31, all scheduled 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., CT.

Those wishing to participate should call the NDSU Pesticide Training and Certification Program Office to pre-register. The telephone number is 701-231-7180. Pre-registration forms are also available on the web at: www.ndsupesticide.org.

The webcasts will cover basic pesticide safety and handling practices, as well as relevant laws and regulations as they pertain to the distribution and use of pesticides. This training is not category specific. It will emphasize practices and procedures that should be useful to all applicators or dealers, whether they are seeking certification in the Agricultural Pest Control category, Wood Preservation category, or any of the 10 other use categories found in North Dakota. The training will also describe the certification process and how to prepare and take exams to obtain a pesticide certificate.