

Extension Proposal Progress Report

Use of Internet and DVD's to Deliver Blueberry Updates and Production Information to Producers (SRSFC Extension Project 2010 E-03)

Principal Investigators:

Eddie D. McGriff

County Agent Coordinator (Coffee County)
UGA Extension Service
709 East Ward Street
Douglas, GA 31533
twobales@uga.edu
912-384-1402
FAX 912-389-4007

Phillip M. Brannen

Extension Fruit Pathologist
2106 Miller Plant Sciences
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
pbrannen@uga.edu
706-542-1250
FAX 706-542-4102

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Objectives: (1) Develop in-field blueberry updates for immediate grower use (Youtube postings and/or short MPEGs). (2) Record production updates and field demonstrations and develop these as stand-alone DVDs for grower use.

Justification: The internet and associated tools (Youtube, podcasts, MPEGs, etc.) have great potential for immediate use by commodity producers. Visual education and technology transfer is particularly important and useful to producers. In addition, we have numerous production meetings each year. While handouts are sometimes provided, the ability to review the actual presentations would be of great value (especially as the growing season progresses – months after an educational event).

In 2008, a very popular Blueberry Profitmaker Course (presentations from specialists, researchers, and industry) was video taped and edited to produce a DVD series. Power Point presentations were incorporated within the DVDs. An in-field demonstration of pruning southern highbush and rabbiteye blueberries was also recorded. A sample of the presentations can be viewed at <http://www.ugaextension.com/coffee/anr/index.html>. As a first effort, these DVDs have become an extremely popular teaching tool, and specialists and agents in other states are also requesting these DVDs; for example, Bob Hochmuth, a multi-county horticultural agent in north Florida, recently requested the DVDs as a teaching aid. Clarkie Leverette, a blueberry producer, indicated that review of the DVDs actually reduced his calls to county agents and specialists. Growers that were not able to attend the course were easily able to obtain the same information, and many commented on the utility of the DVDs, especially the pruning demonstration.

This initial venture into the use of video for technology transfer in blueberry has shown the potential for its use, especially where commodities are geographically concentrated and local information can influence immediate production decisions. The Blueberry Profitmaker Course actually utilized a professional video company, but this type of

equipment and resource can't be available throughout the year for either field visits or standard production meetings. Therefore, there is a need to purchase high quality equipment and software which will allow for in-house production.

Methodologies: We will use blueberry production in southern Georgia counties as a model system to develop internet and DVD resources for producers. Knowledge gained (successes and failures) will be shared with other member states in the consortium. We will develop real-time information on diseases and other timely production issues associated with blueberries. Eddie McGriff is receiving training relative professional video production, so all video clips can be developed in-house. The short clips will be posted to Youtube. Specialists, county agents and industry personnel can be included in these field updates; the issue(s) discussed will be reviewed with the camera, and specialist comments and images will be incorporated within the video stream. We will utilize a host site, i.e. Youtube, to post these videos. A link from either the SRSFC website will be utilized to direct producers to the update. In addition, this link will also be e-mailed to producers.

Equipment will also be utilized to film blueberry production meetings, and these meetings will then provide an archive of information to develop DVDs for producer review. In addition, producers who were not able to attend a meeting will have the same basic resource. With travel limitations in many states, these DVDs can also be used to educate producers within other consortium states. In addition, educational information can be developed, i.e. airblast sprayer calibration, which can also be utilized by producers as either DVD, or with sufficient server memory, web-based resources.

The DVD and web-based aspects of this effort will provide additional incentive for non-member states to join the consortium. Though the links will be posted to the website, only our member states will have access in the future to the e-mail that makes the information timely. In the future, it is desirable that SRSFC agent trainings also be utilized as a venue for video production. The information derived from the above will also help us as we transition to this goal.

Results: The small fruit grant was used to purchase a HD video camera, tripod and accessories to film, edit and make available to producers, industry and University personal on-line and DVD small fruit production meetings and updates. Eddie McGriff is currently filming the Georgia Blueberry Profitmaker Course, a six session course covering blueberry production (12 total hours), and will make it available on DVD. He will also film timely production updates, i.e. disease or insect outbreaks, cultural problems, etc. and have a link (www.smallfruit.org website) so growers will be able to see the problem and determining a solution on-line. He is presently traveling to Chino, California to take video classes on professionally filming and editing the videos.

Conclusions: Due to bureaucratic issues, the purchase of the equipment was delayed till late in the summer, so actual use of the equipment has just started this fall. Eddie will

film the SRSFC training in Savannah (Jan 2011), and this will be made available as well for the SRSFC and participating agents.

Impact Statement: To date, the impact has been minimal, but with the continued use of the equipment, we should have multiple opportunities in the next year to prove the concept. The Savannah SRSFC training will be a good opportunity to develop the concept further, as we will have opportunity to develop a finished product.