

## **Lessons Learned in a Short Period of Time as Peanut Agents in Northeast North Carolina**

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In recent years there has been a substantial change in field crops agents with Cooperative Extension. For example, Cooperative Extension agents in Chowan, Hertford, Nash, and Perquimans counties have from 1½ to 2½, years of experience in their current roles. While peanut acreage in these counties is relatively modest and ranged from 500 to 5,000 lbs/acre (2017), average county yields during 2017 in these counties ranged from 4,000 to 5,000 lbs/acre. A wide range of outreach activities by Cooperative Extension agents are found in these counties and include: establishing a strong on-farm presence; implementing a comprehensive pod blasting program to determine pod maturity for digging date recommendations; utilizing the weather-based advisory system for leaf spot disease and Sclerotinia blight management; providing updates on when to scout and approaches to scouting; recommendations on early season weed and thrips management options; equipment upkeep, pesticide stewardship and farm safety; assisting growers with decisions on digging and harvesting relative to weather, disease, and planning and facilitating annual county or regional peanut meetings for farmers and related agribusiness. In the process of involvement in these activities a number of production related questions have arisen. These include: timing on fungicide spraying, what materials are recommended for use, timing on digging, whether or not acephate should be applied to control thrips, weed identification and herbicide selection, and what varieties will yield the most. These questions are taken into consideration when planning for each county's peanut extension program.