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EXTENSION

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In 2021 Terrell County Extension partnered with Dr. Mark Abney, as well as his graduate student Ms. April Skipper to evaluate Southern Corn Rootworm populations in multiple peanut fields in Terrell County. The timing of this trial was very fortuitous because the food tolerances for Chlorpyrifos was revoked, which was the staple of subterranean insect control in peanut production, particularly here in our heavier soil profiles. This made the need for chemical alternatives to Chlorpyrifos more important than ever to our local producers.

Thirty peanut fields were selected in Terrell County to monitor the Banded Cucumber Beetle. The larvae of this insect, Southern Corn Rootworms are known for feeding on peanut pods and are particularly problematic in heavy soils with ample moisture. Approximately half of the fields selected were dryland, and the other half were irrigated with center pivot irrigation. Fields were deliberately selected so that some bordered corn production, and others were at least a mile from corn fields. This gave us a baseline to determine if proximity to corn influenced beetle populations throughout the summer. Our hypothesis was that fields bordering corn would have higher beetle, and therefore higher damaged pods from their larvae. After monitoring populations every two weeks all summer, this seems to be an accurate theory.

Data from this trial is being shown with our local producers, and the results seem to indicate that fields bordering corn in heavier soil profiles are at higher risk to having elevated populations of Southern Corn Rootworm. However, we have not determined thresholds that warrant treatment, or if yield/grade is affected from these elevated populations. We plan to repeat this work for the 2022 production season to try to narrow down more details, as well as help producers find an alternative now that we have lost Chlorpyrifos. The 2021 Peanut Demonstration grant will be utilized to print a Research poster from this project and take it to APRES this coming summer. Thanks for all your s

Sincerely,

Seth McAllister
Terrell County ANR Agent
UGA Cooperative Extension

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